Labour Monthly

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

FIRST THINGS FIRST

by

D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

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LABOUR MONTHLY DEVELOPMENT FUND

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If compliments were cash, this would be a record month. A soldier says to us: "On convoy work in the North Sea, or as at present in a lonely shore establishment, I have always eagerly awaited each copy of LABOUR MONTHLY. Sometimes the copies have arrived as much as three months adrift, but, out of contact with any organised labour movement as I am, they have always been welcome." Another says: "Having been a reader for eight years, when I joined the Forces I just had to have the LABOUR MONTHLY and I enclose 5s. for six months: it's the most I can afford; it's worth more." This comrade strikes an absolutely fresh note when he says: "My Dad used to read it out to me and Mum, 20 years ago. When I have read 'Notes of the Month' I have had value for my sixpence without turning another page." "The arrival of the LABOUR MONTHLY is one of the best moments of the month." "A great sixpennyworth of real political value." And so on. And so on.

Particularly do we sympathise with a would-be reader in Northern Ireland who, misled by our advertisement in *The Times* into ordering a subscription to LABOUR MONTHLY, received his money back with polite regrets from us that an export ban operated even in that near corner of the British Isles. He promptly returned his cheque to us once more, with the words: "How delightfully naive of me to imagine that your paper could be read in Ireland because of a *Times* advertisement; however, I can at least console myself by re-reading the Atlantic Charter."

The highest praise this month goes to the Cwmllynfell Discussion Group. This small village near Swansea, without even a railway station, held a meeting and raised the splendid sum of £2 for the Development Fund.

If this effort were more widespread the total would soar above the hundred mark, instead of sinking back once more into the fifties.

	£	s.	d.
R. Pearson		2	6
Orpington D.G.		2	6
Amersham D.G.		1	4
Acton D.G.		4	6
L'Humanite		2	0
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R. V. Hill		5	0
L. G. P.	1	0	0
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Ursula Cox		13	0
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O. I. P. Rees		10	0
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D. C. King		3	0
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A. Bruce		5	0
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E. P.		2	0
East Grinstead D.G.		7	6
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Jane		10	0
K. Stevenson		14	0
B. Bailey		7	0
F. W. Sutton		1	6
B. Berman		7	0
D. Palmer		13	0
G. A. Ullathorne		3	0
A. Lowe		1	6
E. C. Byle		3	0
W. F. Lakin-Smith		2	0
W. Hall		5	0
V. Holyman		10	0
F. N. Strange		3	0
Soldier Comrade		2	10
Carshalton C.P.		10	0
J. M. Parker		1	6
C. Robson		5	0
A. F. Perrin		3	0
Holborn D.G.		2	0
J. K. Nesbit		1	6
K. E. Thorpe		3	0
C. J. Franks		2	6
H. W. Carver		10	0
A. Opulski		1	0
J. Walter		3	0
Penrith D.G.		10	0
Chorlton C.P.		10	0
Cosham D.G.		3	0
S. Craven		3	0
K. F. Holmes		3	6
J. Nicholls		1	6
A. F. Ardy		3	0
E. A. Fidler		5	0
John Wilton		7	0
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Aberdeen D.G.		4	6
P. Kilpatrick		2	6
Mrs. Manifold		3	6
F. C. Kearnley		1	6
U. C. Burchell		1	0
F. L.		4	6
Anon., Whitchurch		1	0
Lambeth D.G.		3	0
J. B., Chelmsford		5	0
E. Ruscoe		2	6
Grantham D.G.	1	0	0
J. A. P. Kent		3	0
C. Candler		7	0
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D. H. Calcutt		4	0
Hackney A.E.U. D.G.		5	0
A. Croy		3	0
H. J. Turner		10	0
N. & E. Lipton		5	0
Q. Z.		4	0
Warwick D.G.		5	0
R. F. B.	2	0	0
Addington D.G.		10	0
Jane Conway (Collection)		10	0
R. R., N.W.3	1	0	0
Socialist Sailor	2	10	0
F. Luce		8	6
L. G. P.		10	0
Acton D.G.		1	6
H. Taylor		4	2
B. D. H. H.		7	0
R. T.	5	0	0
Gruzya Uchitiellya	1	0	0
Jane		10	0
J. Nathan		3	6
A. Warham		3	0
M. P.		5	0
E. C. Hathway		13	0
D. Cohen		5	0
N. Minnion		3	0
D. Robinson		2	0
Cerporal		5	0
B. Duffy		1	0
E. D. McCallum		5	0
Woodford D.G.		5	0
H. S. M.		2	6
Red Infantryman		10	0
L'Humanite		2	0
Royston Green		3	0
Bankhead D.G.		5	0
A. Miller		1	6
F. Coombes			6
A. R. M.		5	0
E. J. O. Barnes		3	10
G. Sargent		10	0
Macclesfield D.G.		4	0
J. Macdonald		3	0
Forest Gate D.G.		6	0
E. Murrell		3	0
Aberdeen D.G.		3	0
Princes Risboro' D.G.		2	6
G.R.		4	0
Red N.C.O. (N.E.)		2	6
Beckenham D.G.		12	6
R. Pearson		2	6
Banstead D.G.		7	6
Cwmllynfell D.G.	2	0	0
A. Nicholls		1	6

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Into Action!

The great offensive has begun.

The launching of the main Soviet offensive against the Nazi armies is the signal for the united offensive of all the peoples opposed to Hitler to strike now with all their power for the complete defeat of Hitler in these coming months. The most favourable opportunity for that maximum combined action of the anti-Hitler alliance which is universally recognised as essential for victory is now here. But we must use the opportunity.

Marshal Timoshenko's Order of the Day on May 17 has proclaimed :—

> *" We have entered a new period of the war—the period of liberation of Soviet lands from the Hitlerite rabble. I hereby order the troops to begin the decisive offensive against our vilest enemy, the German Fascist army ; to exterminate its man-power and war materials ; and to hoist our glorious Soviet banner over the liberated cities and villages."*

The terms of the Soviet broadcast in January of this year may be recalled, following the opening of the counter-offensive last December, when it was explained that " this is not yet the general offensive ; it is only the beginning " :—

> *" The offensive really begins with all the peoples of Europe hearing in the din of battle the voice of liberty and the call to action, and rising in a popular war which will engulf the Continent from the northernmost tip of Norway to Southern Greece and from the Vistula to the Atlantic.*
>
> *" 1942 will mark this great and decisive offensive against Nazi tyranny."*

This hour has now come. It is " the decisive offensive." We must act.

* * * *

Only one issue now dominates British politics—the immediate establishment of the Second Front in the West. This is the pivot of fulfilment of Britain's part in the alliance of common victory. This task can only be accomplished by a united nation and a united Government.

Britain's immediate establishment of the Second Front in the West, with the support of the United States, with the stimulation it will mean to the revolt of the enslaved European peoples, can now co-operate with the Soviet thrust in the East to ensure the speedy defeat of Hitler in these coming months and the winning of victory this year. Delay may mean a prolonged war of attrition.

* * * *

A certain change of expression on the question of the Second Front in the West has taken place in official statements during recent weeks. Lord Beaverbrook's outspoken declaration of April 22 has been followed by the Prime Minister's broadcast of May 10, with its friendly reference to the agitation for the Second Front as stimulating for morale ; by Sir Stafford Cripps's speech of May 17, declaring with regard to " a Second Front in Western Europe " that " the Government are as keen and anxious for this to materialise

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as you are" ; and by Sir Stafford Cripps's reply to the parliamentary debate on May 20, that the Government "intend" to "make a carefully planned attack upon the Continent of Europe."

But a change of expression is not yet the same as a change of policy. The force of events and mass pressure are beginning to produce their effect. This is registered in the change of tone of official expression. We understand that, even if a definite decision for present policy has been reached, the Government cannot announce its specific action beforehand. We do not prejudge the action of the Government. But it must be noted that there is no evidence yet of any decisive change of present policy by the Government. All the declarations have been only declarations of general principle, in favour of the principle of the Second Front, without reference to the present urgent moment. The most specific declaration, that of Sir Stafford Cripps in the parliamentary debate on May 20, stated that the strategy of the air offensive against Germany would continue "until such time as we are able to make a carefully planned attack upon the Continent of Europe, which we intend to do." And in the same debate the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, described the present moment as "a pause before the full summer campaign breaks upon us."

Therefore it is necessary now more than ever to intensify the fight for the Second Front. Undoubtedly there is now very wide support, including in official expression, for the principle of the Second Front in the West. But the question is no longer the question of the principle of the Second Front in the West. The decisive question is: When?

* * * *

We cannot afford to delay. The strategic time is now—when the Soviet forces are already in full action, when the issue is in the balance, when the opportunity is highest, when the European peoples are looking for our action, when our intervention can play a crucial part in the joint victory.

We cannot allow the serious demand for the immediate establishment of the Second Front in the West to be put off with complimentary references to its value for morale—as if the problem were how to maintain the morale of the people, instead of how to deliver the most decisive blows against the enemy, with full confidence that action is the best stimulus to morale. After all the complimentary references have been made, and after all the mounting promises of future action have been made, the fact remains that the Second Front in the West does not yet exist, when the need is most urgent; that all the promises are undated drafts on the future; and the present visible policy is still that of the air bombing offensive and intensified commando raids, which cannot be a substitute for the Second Front. The nation will give full support to the Government in the establishment of the Second Front; but until the Second Front is established, the agitation must and will continue and be increased.

We do not wish to be condemned again to be passive spectators of a battle in which the fate of the people of this country and of mankind is being determined. We do not wish to see our rulers watching for the fortunes of battle in the East before determining their action; so that their intervention either only arrives after the most favourable moment is passed, or arrives only after the Soviet forces have already done the work of breaking the enemy, so that the intervention only takes on the character of a hasty attempt to participate in a settlement on the basis of a victory won by others, instead of a worthy participation in winning the victory.

* * * *

Essential for the establishment of the Second Front is national unity.

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A wide series of attacks have been delivered against the Government from reactionary quarters at the same time as the first declarations of the Government in favour of the principle of the Second Front have been made. The 1922 *Committee issues its fiat to wreck the fuel rationing scheme at the very moment when every ounce of productive power is needed for the war front. The "Independents" begin to show their true colours and link up in their party formation under the auspices of a Cunningham-Reid. Denunciations of the Second Front sound from a McGovern, while the pacifist friends of Fascism begin to hint anew at appeasement. Under the guise of military criticism of the Prime Minister, the vendetta against the Government is carried on. It is necessary to recognise the hand of the Munichite pro-Fascist elements at work in fomenting these intrigues. All these reactionary forces seek to exploit impatience in popular feeling or within Labour ranks with the conditions of coalition or with shortcomings of the Government.*

If such a political situation of demoralisation and disintegration were allowed to develop, it would be equally fatal to the essential conditions necessary for the establishment of the Second Front, to the interests of the British-Soviet Alliance, and to the cause of victory over Hitler.

National Unity for Victory in 1942 : *this must be our aim.*

* * * *

The united demand of the nation for the immediate establishment of the Second Front in the West must make itself felt with such force that not a day's further delay can continue.

The greatest responsibility here rests on the labour movement.

Two Conferences of the main political formations of the organised working-class movement will have met at this critical turning point, by the time these lines appear—the Special National Conference of the Communist Party and the Annual Conference of the Labour Party.

Whatever the differences on other issues, let the entire strength of the organised working-class movement be united on this issue : for full common action with the Soviet offensive, for the immediate establishment of the Second Front in the West, for victory in 1942. *A united campaign of the entire labour movement on this issue would rally the whole nation in support ; it would compel the speedy adoption of the policy for victory by the Government ; it would win the enthusiastic response of all sections of the people for all measures necessary, in the sphere of production, in social and economic organisation, in the mobilisation of man-power and woman-power, and in the firm welding of national unity and closing of divisions, to make possible and sustain the Second Front for victory.*

This is the task which now lies before us. The campaign for working-class unity, for national unity in the war effort, and for the adoption of the policy for victory in 1942, *must now exceed all that has gone before. The fate of the working-class movement, of this country and of the world, is being shaped in these coming days. Every socialist and trade unionist, every democrat, and every man and woman of the nation will be judged by the part that they play in the supreme phase of the conflict which now develops, and the opportunity which lies within our grasp, for the final destruction of Nazi tyranny, the ending of the war by the victory of the peoples, and the consequent opening of the gates to the advance of human freedom.*

R. P. D.

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The Labour Movement and the War

by R. PALME DUTT

In view of its bearing on the current political situation, especially with reference to the questions of national unity and the role of the labour movement in the national front, we print below, in shortened form, in order to make it already available to all LABOUR MONTHLY *readers, the concluding chapter of R. Palme Dutt's forthcoming book, "Britain in the World Front," which will be published in June.*

THE speediest victory of Britain and Britain's allies over Hitler is not the special interest of one class or section of the nation, but the common interest of all classes and sections of the nation. This common aim unites widely differing classes and parties, however much they may be opposed on other issues, in a single common task, the organisation of the full strength of the nation for the defeat of Hitler.

This collaboration of all sections of the nation, of normally opposed classes, parties and organisations, constitutes the *united national front* for the defeat of Hitler. It finds expression in the united endeavour of the national war effort. In industry it finds expression in the co-operation of employers, management and workers for maximum war production. In the political field it finds expression in the co-operation of parties in parliament and in elections, and in the support of a Coalition Government of National Unity, based at present on the Conservative, Liberal and Labour Parties.

The weakness of the national front as at present developed is its formal character of a collaboration only of the official machines of the older parties; it makes no attempt to reach out to the vast web of organisations of the people, social, economic, sporting, religious or political, of youth or of women; it makes no attempt to draw in the practical participation of the masses of active men and women of all parties and of no party. Hence the tendencies of many men and women who are awakening to political life and interest in the conditions of the war and seeking new forms of political expression, to be drawn in the wake of the manifold new "independent" groupings which crop up like mushrooms, often with very dubious antecedents, and which in fact, whatever their professions, cut across and break up national unity. These tendencies are a dangerous warning-signal. The disruption of national unity, even though beginning under the impetus of progressive desires and impatience of a section of the electors, would in fact play into the hands of the powerful reactionary forces which carried through the old policies of conciliation to Fascism, which are still heavily represented in the existing Conservative majority in Parliament, and which, although not daring for the moment to proclaim their aims in the open, are on the look-out for any signs of the break-up of national unity to resume their intrigues and combinations for the *pursuit of their old aims under new forms.* All serious anti-Fascists and supporters of decisive victory over Hitler need to recognise that the inadequacies of the existing united national front, and the legitimate criticisms which can be brought against its present working, demonstrate the necessity to strengthen it, and to strengthen the Government as the representative of the democratic anti-Fascist will to victory of the people, and not to weaken it. The disruption of national unity only serves the interests of Hitler.

The transition, which is thus now imperative and urgent, from the present largely formal united national front, which in respect of organisation mainly exists on top, to the real living unity of the entire nation, drawing in the active democratic participation of the masses of men and women and of the mass organisations of the people, depends above all on the role of the working-class movement. Only a strong, active and united working class, rallying and drawing into activity other sections of the people, can constitute the core of national unity. Without this, national unity is distorted and crippled. This is the key to the problems of the present political situation in Britain.

The working class has no interests opposed to the interests of the united national front for victory over Hitler. The working class acts and fights as an integral

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part of the united national front. The strengthening of national unity is the vital concern of the working class, which has the most direct interest, for its very existence and the future of its aims, to secure the complete defeat of Fascism.

Within the broad unity of the national front for the defeat of Hitler, the organised workers, representing the most active and politically conscious sections of the democratic forces of the nation, have a distinctive role to play and a foremost responsibility to fulfil.

The working class constitutes the majority of the nation—and not merely the arithmetical majority, but that section which bears the decisive burden of the war effort alike in the field of production and in the fighting services. The role of the working class is decisive for the success of the war effort.

The working class is the rising class, which represents the future and which is least tied by the trammels of the past. The inevitable conflict between private property interests or monopolist restrictive policies and the maximum war effort means that the propertied sections of the nation, with the exception of a few individuals, are hampered from giving full and unqualified support to the maximum war effort by considerations for vested interests or fears of weakening the structure of property rights. The workers are not shackled by these limitations ; they are by comparison free and unprejudiced in approach ; they are ready to welcome what is new and progressive ; they are not held back by fears of encroachment on vested interests ; there is a wealth of creative energy in the working class which is still barely tapped in this country. It is not for nothing that that country where the working class has assumed power and the leadership of society has astonished the world by its limitless creative energy and resourcefulness, abundance of young and talented leading forces in every sphere, economic, political or military, its unshakable national unity, heroism, mass enthusiasm, capacity for self-sacrifice and dynamic achievement.

The working class is the most determined and inflexible anti-Fascist section of the nation. Within the propertied classes there is division and conflict of interests and outlook in relation to Fascism, because powerful sections see in Fascism the protection of their interests against the working class and socialism, and fear that a too decisive victory over Fascism would open the gates to the future victory of Socialism. These calculations and fears among the propertied sections in all countries, which have been cunningly played on by Nazi propaganda, provide the basis of Munichism, the Quislings and the Fifth Column. The Fifth Column, as the War Cabinet Minister, Mr. Bevin, truly pointed out in July, 1940, has never come from the working class, but always " from higher up." Thus considerable sections of the propertied classes enter on the war against Fascism with a divided allegiance.

For the workers, on the other hand, the battle against Fascism is absolute and without compromise. Between Fascism and the working-class movement the battle is mortal, through whatever forms it must pass ; one or the other must perish. The defeat of Fascism is the condition of survival of the working-class movement and of the advance to Socialism. In this battle is being determined the fate of the working-class movement and the future of the world.

Finally, the working class is the principal organised section of the nation and of democracy. The six million trade unionists, representing with their families the majority of the population ; the two million members of the Labour Party ; the nine million co-operators ; the countless activity of the organised workers in the factories through their shop stewards and shop and works committees, and to-day also through the joint production committees ; the Communist Party with an active membership and range of propaganda and campaigning exceeding that of any other political party or organisation ; all these represent the forces of the organised working class. The workers are trained in discipline, solidarity, democratic initiative and organisation, self-sacrifice and tenacious struggle. They have learned the lessons of unity and collective action in place of individualism and egoism. Through generations of struggle against heavy odds they have built up their organisation, won their rights, and fought in the forefront of every battle for democratic freedom, national liberty and human progress. Thus the organised workers have won and earned the role of

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the vanguard of the people, able and with the right, to the extent that they have achieved their own unity and leadership, to rally and draw with them in common action the masses of the people.

The tasks which the working-class movement needs to fulfil within the common national front for the defeat of Hitler correspond to the character of the conflict and represent the highest level of responsibility in the long record of struggle of the working class.

First, the organised working class should be the strongest champion, organiser and defender of national unity for the defeat of Hitler. Against all hesitations and vacillations in other classes and sections of the nation; against all intrigues of adventurers and pro-Fascist elements for the disruption of national unity; against all moods of passivity, half-heartedness, defeatism, war weariness, flinching from action and sacrifice, or leftist impatience, either in its own ranks or in the unorganised masses of the people, the strength, unity and leadership of the organised working class should be the most powerful bulwark and rallying centre to lead, unite, inspire, hold firm and draw into active participation all sections of the people.

In this life-and-death struggle the working class can afford to lose no allies, however partial, hesitant or vacillating. The working class stands out and must stand out as the most determined upholder of national and international unity for the military defeat of German Fascism.

Second, the working class should not only be the most active upholder of the united national front for the defeat of Hitler, but should also be the most active driving force within the united national front. The working class has its positive contribution to make in the sphere of policy, programme and leadership. In every field of the struggle, in strategy, in political mobilisation, in war production, in social and economic organisation, in colonial policy, in diplomatic policy, in propaganda, in the questions of war aims, the most active struggle needs to be conducted for the measures which are necessary in the interests of the world alliance for speediest victory over Fascism. The working-class movement has the power and the responsibility to take the initiative in the fight to win support for these measures within the united national front and for their adoption by the Government.

Such measures as the Second Front, Freedom for India, the effective development of war production under unified control, the lifting of the ban on the *Daily Worker* and the strengthening of the National Government are all measures which are urgently necessary for victory over Hitler, but in relation to which there is still hesitation, indifference or resistance within the united national front. It is essential to develop an informed public opinion in support of these measures within the united national front, to organise mass pressure in order to overcome reactionary resistance and strengthen the hands of the Government for carrying them out, and to secure their adoption by the Government as the representative of national unity. The working-class movement has here a decisive role to play in voicing, leading and organising the fight for such measures.

Third, the organised working-class movement has a special responsibility, in relation to the requirements of the war effort, to protect the standards, conditions and rights of the workers and of the masses of the people. In the interests of the major immediate aim of victory over Hitler, the workers have had to make many concessions, which under other conditions would have been stubbornly contested. It is the concern of the organised working-class movement to see that these concessions are not exploited in the sectional interests of monopoly capital; that the compulsory powers, which have been freely used against the workers, are equally used, wherever the needs of the war dictate, against big capital; and that, within the limitations of war conditions, the standards and health of the working people take precedence as the first charge on all available means of consumption, in place of the present excess consumption expenditure of the upper incomes and propertied sections. For this purpose the working-class movement needs to take special concern for the improvement of the pay, conditions and allowances of those serving in the armed forces and their dependants; the levelling up of old age pensions, widows' pensions and other social service benefits; the improvement of women

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workers' wages and conditions with the aim to realise effective equality of pay, and the raising of the wages of low-paid sections ; the revision of taxation to take all excess incomes above a certain level, and raise the exemption limit for lower incomes ; the extension of rationing and price control ; the protection of the rights of the workers in the factories ; the protection of working-class and democratic rights of propaganda and organisation, etc. Similarly in the necessary changes in industry the working-class organisations can alone judge the best ways and methods to combine the two objectives of maximum production with the safeguarding of the rights and interests and future claims of the workers. All these questions, while the initiative and guidance in solving them must come especially from the working-class movement, are no separate interest of a section, but the vital interest of the united war effort, for the purposes of democratic anti-Fascist war and for the protection of the future.

Fourth, the strength, unity and active leading role of the working-class movement is the best guarantee, not only for the realisation of the present maximum war effort and united strategy for victory, but also for the future, for the character of the settlement which will follow the war, for the character of the organisation of the world after the war, and for the democratic and social advance which must follow victory over Fascism. No paper plan and no paper document can guarantee this. The hatching of elaborate plans of post-war reconstruction at the present moment, before the premisses are present, can easily take on a reactionary hue, or become a diversion from present urgent tasks. Only the real relations of social and political forces at the conclusion of the war will determine the outcome. Only a powerful and united working-class movement can ensure that the outcome shall correspond to the interests of the working people. But this depends on the present strengthening, achievement of unity and fulfilment of its present political role of the working-class movement. The present determines the future.

In order to fulfil these tasks, the working-class movement needs to be strong and united, and with a policy and leadership capable of responding to present needs. The workers need to build up their organisation, trade union, political and co-operative ; to achieve unity and overcome sectional barriers and divisions ; to pursue actively a policy and programme corresponding to the urgent needs of the war ; and to develop effective political leadership. The picture of the outstanding role which the working-class movement can and should fulfil in the present situation is still far from the picture of what has so far been achieved. *Within the framework of national unity there is not yet working-class unity.* This is a grave and dangerous contradiction which undermines national unity and shifts the balance in favour of reactionary forces. All the difficulties of the present political situation arise from the fact that there is not yet a strong and united working-class movement fulfilling that active and leading role within the united national front which it can and should fulfil. Hence the manifold "independent" groupings are enabled to press their competing claims for the support of the people, and to confuse and weaken the popular forces for the ultimate benefit of reaction.

The experience of the critical years leading up to the present war already demonstrated the truth of this. Why was it possible for the policies of "non-intervention" in Spain, of Munich, of conciliation to Hitler, of refusal of the British-Soviet Pact and sabotage of collective security to be carried through by the Chamberlain Government, in spite of the overwhelming strength of popular opinion against them (87 per cent. poll for the British-Soviet Pact, eleven millions vote for the Peace Ballot for collective security, etc.), and the actual division of the ruling class, shown in the division of the Conservative Party? Only because the organised working-class movement failed to fulfil its task of rallying and uniting the working-class and democratic forces in a common front or People's Front, which would have been capable—as opponents of the policy at the time recognised—of defeating Chamberlain and compelling a change of course. It is now widely recognised that if this policy, which was advocated at the time by the Communist Party, had been followed, we should be in a different situation to-day, and we should probably have been able to avoid the present war, or, had it come, to have

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met it from the outset in a far more favourable situation.

To-day the representatives of the organised working-class movement are participating in the Coalition Government for the defeat of Hitler. But this participation of individuals in a War Ministry, with little evidence of important influence on the major questions of policy, is far from equivalent to the active participation of a strong and united working-class movement in the common national front, presenting its proposals and programme for the common cause, mobilising public opinion, and able in this way, both directly and through its representatives (whose voice would become strong as the voice of a mighty united movement with popular support), to exercise its due and powerful impress on the combined policy finally adopted by the Government. The weakness of the present situation, which is acutely felt by Labour supporters throughout the country, is not so much a question of the character of the individual representatives participating in the Coalition Ministry, as of the fact that this personal participation is regarded as a substitute for the participation of the working-class movement in the national front, and is even made the occasion for closing down the political activity of the working-class movement, with consequent tendencies to decline of membership and stagnation of organisation, in this moment of most intense crisis, fateful issues and highest responsibility for the whole future of the movement.

In consequence, the criticism is sometimes expressed by some Labour supporters that the mistake lies in the participation in the Coalition Government, and that the solution is for Labour to come out of the Coalition. This, in the present situation, when Labour is in a minority in Parliament, and there could be no question of Labour alone representing national unity, is equivalent to the denial of the necessity for national unity for the defeat of Hitler. Such a policy would play straight into the hands of reaction and the pro-Hitler forces. The maintenance of national unity, and of a Government representative of all political sections which stand for victory over Hitler, is essential for victory over Hitler, and is therefore the vital interest of the working-class movement. The fault does not lie in the participation in the Coalition, which is indispensable in the present relations of political forces, but in the policy pursued. The remedy does not lie in the disruption of national unity, and of the Coalition Government founded on its basis, but in the strengthening of the active role and positive leadership of the working-class movement in the national front.

Similarly the criticism is sometimes heard that the labour movement is "dead," that there is stagnation, apathy and passivity in the localities, that organisation has fallen to pieces, and that the masses are turning elsewhere; and the conclusion is drawn that the future must be sought in some new "independent," "non-party" grouping or formation without roots in the organised workers or their mass organisations. This gloomy picture of the present situation of the organised working-class movement is not a true picture. It is one-sided because it sees only what is going down and not what is rising; it sees a process of change and transition, which is the stirring of new life, as a process of decay and death. It is not the labour movement that is going down, but only old policies and methods which are discredited; new forces are arising to carry forward the movement and respond to present needs. Our task must be to assist this advance, and to clear away the obstacles which still stand in the path of further advance.

The workers are not quiescent. There is in fact abounding life and activity of the organised working-class movement, even though still partial, and even though still held in by many limitations. The rise of trade union membership to over six millions represents the highest level for twenty years. Organisation and activity in the factories is more strongly developed than it has ever been, and is full of vitality, with plentiful evidence of keen enthusiasm and mass participation. Sales of working-class literature have multiplied many times over during the war, and there is a new and serious reading public among the workers. The Communist Party has more than trebled its membership since the outbreak of war, and more than doubled it in the most recent period, reaching a total of fifty thousand active individual members, a new type of development in socialist organisation in this

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country. On the basis of its policy expressing the plain common interests of the workers and of the entire nation in the present struggle, it has been able to organise campaigns, meetings and demonstrations, with the participation of representatives of all sections of the working-class and democratic movement, which have won striking mass support exceeding previous levels of political campaigning and in certain cases exercising a perceptible influence in the political situation (campaigns for the removal of Margesson and Moore-Brabazon, for the Second Front, etc.)*

There is, therefore, no ground for deducing a decline in political interest of the organised workers from the recent decline in membership and local organisation of the Labour Party. This is only a reflection of the policies pursued during this period, the closing down of activities, and the harmful effects of the system of bans and exclusions. The removal of these causes could rapidly show a different picture.

The conclusion is evident. If the relatively small numbers of the most politically conscious workers organised in the Communist Party and the united movement have been already able to achieve a degree of mass response untouched by any other political party or organisation, how much more could be achieved if the entire organised working-class movement were brought behind these demands and mobilised in united activity on a common immediate programme?

What is needed? The first necessity is to establish effective working-class unity in action. The still continuing opposition of the Labour Party leadership to co-operation of the different sections of the working-class movement in the present urgent common fight, and the imposition of the system of bans and exclusions within the political labour movement, with extension to the trade union sphere in respect of trades councils and in some unions, is less than ever defensible in the present situation. Despite the progressive step forward of the establishment of the British-Soviet Trade Union Committee, the policy of hostility to working-class unity within Britain has even been intensified in certain respects since the establishment of British-Soviet unity. Fortunately, the bans have not always been successful, and co-operation is extending in practice, in accordance with the healthy sense of the overwhelming majority of the working-class movement; but it is still heavily impeded by the present disciplinary measures and the absence of co-operation on a national scale.

The refusal of unity and the system of division of the working-class movement enabled Hitler to come to power in Germany. The same system serves the interests of Hitler in Britain to-day. It is necessary to make a serious attempt to overcome the present difficulties and find the way to establish united action and the free functioning of a united working-class movement, by the co-operation of the Labour Party and the Communist Party, and the removal of those disciplinary bans on co-operation which paralyse the local working-class movement or prevent the democratic election of representatives and expression of opinion within the working-class movement. The establishment of such working-class unity in action would enormously stimulate the growth, self-confidence, enthusiasm and revived activity of the entire working-class movement.

Second, such working-class unity in action needs to be based on a common immediate programme. It is necessary to adopt a common programme of action of the united working-class movement corresponding to the present needs for the achievement of victory in 1942, and to be campaigned for within the framework of the united national front. The question of working-class unity is not merely a question of organisation; it is a question of policy. At present there is dangerous disunity in practice, and the authority and responsibility of the working-class movement is thereby weakened. When some representative leaders associate with the agitation of a Vansittart; when others are associated with pacifist groupings which are in fact pro-Fascist in their policy; when Labour electors withhold support

* The Trafalgar Square demonstration for the Second Front in March, 1942, organised by the Communist Party, exceeded any previous level of demonstrations in Trafalgar Square, according to the testimony of the veteran, Ben Tillett, ranging over the memories of sixty years since the great demonstrations of the eighties in the early days of the modern political working-class movement.

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from candidates representing national unity and their leaders hesitate even to appear on a platform in a by-election to recommend national unity; then it is obvious that such demoralisation is weakening to the working-class movement and prevents it from fulfilling the role which it should fulfil in the national front. The adoption of a common immediate programme and campaign of a united working-class movement, expressing the urgent necessary measures for speediest victory over Hitler, would rally all sections of the workers in support, end the weaknesses and vacillations, and lead to the very great strengthening of the working-class movement and its political role.

Third, the campaign of the united working-class movement needs to be developed with the active co-operation of all sections. For this purpose the extension of working-class activity, and the protection, restoration or extension of the necessary democratic rights for anti-Fascist propaganda and agitation are essential. In the forefront here stands the question of the restoration of the *Daily Worker*. It is now admitted by the widest sections of opinion that the maintenance of the ban on the *Daily Worker* is indefensible. This question is vital for the strengthening of the working-class movement, no less than for the cause of press freedom, democratic rights and national unity in the fight against Hitler. The opinion of leading trade unions and democratic organisations has emphatically called for the lifting of the ban. The *Daily Worker* since its foundation in 1930 has stood in the forefront of the fight for the unity of the working people, for opposition to Fascism, and for co-operation with the Soviet Union. To-day it could fulfil a role which would mobilise, inspire and organise mass opinion and activity throughout the country for the united national fight against Hitler, for intensified war production, for the strengthening of the working-class movement and for speedy victory. The attitude towards the ban on the *Daily Worker* is becoming more and more a touchstone of the whole attitude towards the war and the democratic anti-Fascist aims of the war. It is imperative in the interests of the working-class movement, no less than of the anti-Fascist fight and of the cause of victory over Hitler that the *Daily Worker* should be immediately restored in order to fulfil the great role which it can play in the cause of the working class and of democracy.

Such a revival of working-class activity, on the basis of the establishment of working-class unity and a united campaign, would not merely strengthen the working-class movement and the fulfilment of its role in the national front, but would greatly strengthen the entire national war effort and the will to victory. This path would lead to the most rapid achievement of a combined strategy, the opening up of the Second Front in Europe, and the accomplishment of those accompanying necessary measures which would help to make possible the realisation of the aim of victory in 1942.

More than this. A strong and united working-class movement in this country would thus help to create the most favourable conditions for the speedy victorious ending of the war against Hitler. At the same time it would represent the most effective force on the side of the people for tackling the problems which would follow such a victory.

Great problems and great tasks lie before us. We need to defeat Fascism. We need to ensure that the world we shall create after the defeat of Fascism shall not permit the continued domination of those reactionary forces which have produced Fascism and the present evils, but shall correspond to the aspirations of the people for freedom, for a durable peace and for better conditions of life. We can achieve these aims, provided that we fulfil our present tasks and build up our strength and unity of the working-class and popular forces in the battles of to-day to be capable of controlling the issues of the future. The greatest responsibility here rests with the working class.

In proportion as we fulfil our present tasks, and build up the strength of the working-class movement in so doing, we shall be strong also to face the future.

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First Things First

by D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

RECONSTRUCTION is in the air. A multiplicity of ministers, civil servants, planning experts, special committees, even a committee of the War Cabinet, are giving much and in many cases all of their time to it, with the active approval of the Labour Party and of most of the public. Concentration on this field of activity has gone far. Indeed, in the House of Lords, on November 18, 1941, Lord Cranborne, replying for the Government to a motion relating to the fifth point of the Atlantic Charter—designed to secure improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security—postponed the immediate problems of the war with the words :—

> I can assure my noble friend that no matter is now engaging the attention of His Majesty's Government more than the question of unemployment.

That the general mass of people should welcome consideration of the great problems of the future is natural enough. All of us—above all the workers—have in our memories the bitter experiences of the last war, and the frustrations and disappointments of the inter-war period ; we do not want a peace like the last, nor another " inter-war " period at all. We mean to have a real peace, a real end to war, a really better world ; and we know that to win them we must work, and plan, and overcome obstacles. But we must not make mistakes ; and, if we are to avoid mistakes, we must move cautiously, and study each new situation with care.

What is the first condition of post-war planning—security, freedom, life itself ? Why, victory. Victory, complete and unmistakable, over Fascism. An "all-out" drive for victory in 1942.

This victory can and will be won ; but it is not won yet. Nor is it easy ; it is an all-engrossing task, calling for the utmost expenditure of effort and skill. We are now at the most critical stage of the war ; the decisive battles have in truth already started. The prospects of putting an end to Fascism in 1942 depend on what the peoples and the governments of Britain and her allies do now. Everywhere in this country there is an anxious questioning as to what our government will do. When, and how, and where, will it take the initiative and enlarge our contribution to the common victory ? When, in particular, will it open the Second Front in Europe (not to " help " the U.S.S.R., that happy land which has so little difficulty in forming the main lines of the solution of its " reconstruction " problems, but to help us all to our common victory) ?

In that mood, at this moment, and with those tasks ahead of us, we ought to be devoting all our thoughts and energies to the direct reinforcement of the war effort, in the armed forces, in industry, everywhere. But it is precisely at this moment that extensive schemes of reconstruction are brought prominently before the public, and ordinary citizens are ostentatiously assured that their futures are being carefully planned.

In these circumstances, whilst having no common ground whatever with the objections of such reactionaries as the Bishop of Gloucester and Sir Percy Bates, who want us in effect to get on with our dying, not to " reason why," and to leave to such " elders and betters " as themselves the task of looking after the shape of the world, for whose misshape they are already so largely responsible, we must be very anxious—on the basis of our own ideals and intentions—as to the effects of concentration on post-war planning, and the possible political motives of some of its supporters. Post-war planning can be as reactionary as its opposite, if it constitutes a diversion from the pursuit of victory. Such a diversion—even if it goes no further than it has already gone—can have a dangerous soporific effect, encouraging a dreamy planning of post-war heavens, and a correspondingly less vivid realisation of the hell of possible Fascist success ; and it can also create the illusion of a pleasant sharing out of labour, whereunder the U.S.S.R. pays the major human cost of defeating the enemy whilst our ruling class (long secretly addicted to planning, we have to suppose !) brings its skill to bear on building a new world on the victory it will graciously adopt.

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We must remember, too, that war and post-war are not two sharply divided stages, which can be dealt with separately. The future grows out of the present; both depend on the strength of the progressive forces; and what can be won in the future depends on what we do now. In serving the war, we are in no sense neglecting the peace; we are doing much more than securing the military victory which is a condition of future freedom; we are actively preparing for that freedom. All who are really fighting for strong and well-directed action against the enemy now are automatically building the future; as that fine journalist, Morris U. Schappes, wrote in "New Masses" on February 24, 1942, "a labour movement growing stronger in the process of destroying the Axis will be the better able to influence the direction of the peace."

There is a still more important point to be considered—that it is impossible to foresee the conditions in which reconstruction on the grand scale must ultimately take place. It is not as if we were faced merely with preparations to deal with a number of immediate or short-term technical problems like demobilisation and some measure of building; it is a question of large-scale plans for the whole shape of society, a "new order" involving the study of such elaborate and contentious matters as international trade after the war, colonial problems, the feeding of Europe—or is to be, as before, the feeding of those sections which prove to be politically amenable?—and the planning, control, and ownership of industry. As Mr. Attlee described it in an answer to a House of Commons question on May 6 last: "Plans for post-war reconstruction, both internal and world-wide, are being actively prepared under the general guidance and control of Sir William Jowitt, who has in mind the question of post-war international economic co-operation."

(A new order is beginning to be planned, too, for the defeated states and their peoples; your Vansittarts are really "planning the post-war world" as much as all your Reiths, Portals, Greenwoods, Andersons, and Jowitts.)

The impossibility of foreseeing the conditions for such reconstruction is clear. They depend on the development of forces which have not yet grouped themselves, and all that can safely be done at this stage is not to plan construction but to secure that no one can maintain or capture a position in which he can hinder or obstruct it when the time does come.

It is surely idle or impossible to make detailed plans at present. What do we know now of the state the world will be in, even next December? How many millions in Europe will yet die of starvation or typhus? How many countries or states will there be? How many of them will be Socialist or Communist? Shall we here have monopoly capitalism? Shall we have a standing army of 2,000,000 or of 20,000? Will there be international Free Trade, or planned international trade, or cut-throat anarchical trade war, or barter, or no trade at all, but isolation and autarchy? Who can answer these questions? And who, without answering them, can hope to do any planning without wasting his time? He would be preparing blue-prints of a building with no knowledge of the site, the materials available, the accommodation required, the standard that can be afforded; he would not know who was the architect or the engineer under whom he would be working; indeed, he wouldn't know who were the prospective tenants or who was the building owner.

And, if attempt be made to answer these questions, the mere attempt necessarily awakens all the major latent antagonisms of our society, destroys national unity, and risks the loss of the war. We should have to begin by deciding in effect under what system we are to live. We cannot plan the great lines of reconstruction without general agreement as to our future system, and such agreement is impossible so long as the supporters of the *chaos quo*, however clearly they may recognise—or pay lip service to—the need for some change, are not yet prepared to adopt any policy which would commend itself to the labour movement as a whole. As soon as one examines even the more progressive reform schemes of the monopolists, such as Mr. Courtauld's, or the declarations of the International Labour Office, or of Mr. Ernest Bevin in his speech to the recent meeting of that body, or any of the statements of the representative leaders of specific industries, such as Mr. Runciman's address to the Chamber of Shipping, one realises that they have little common ground with one

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another and still less with the forces of progress. Mr. Bevin, for example, when addressing the meeting of the I.L.O., declared himself anxious to maintain after the war, " for the sake of orderly transition," the monopoly controls at present existing, which appear to most people to be formidable bastions of privilege permitting of no " transition " to progress, and needing to be evacuated and replaced by popular democratic control long before the end of the war. And when he says :—

> The statesmen and leaders of the world must stand together resolutely and hold on to some form of control while the foundations of peace, stability, and orderly development are being laid. There must be national and international discipline for the sake of the generations yet unborn,

he is presumably referring to the "statesmen and leaders" of this country as they stand at present, subject to minor changes and reshufflings. Just to take this small instance alone, it is difficult to see what common ground there is between reconstruction as it would be planned or carried out by that group and as it would be preferred by the working-class government which some of us are entitled to desire..

Mr. Courtauld, *reculant pour ne pas sauter* (retreating in order not to be blown up), offers us a nice-sounding fatherly industrial state, firmly based on class rule and having an odd resemblance—no doubt quite without Mr. Courtauld's knowledge—to some of the programmes in which Hitler's monopoly - capitalist masters dressed up their designs before they came to power. Not all of us can agree with that.

Mr. Runciman, in his " Presidential Address " to the Chamber of Shipping—a body so reactionary that one wonders why its members do not have their ships built to navigate backwards rather than forwards—expressed almost every view that passed for Tory gospel fifty years ago, and brought them up to date by the proposal that the government should have the additional privileges of protecting the industry from the competition of passenger aircraft and of financing it on its own terms without any control.

Again, in an important article in *The Times* of March 24, 1942, emphasis was laid on Anglo-American co-operation ; " if," it ran, " the two governments and the two peoples can work out a common policy, they can give a lead which other governments and peoples will readily follow." The reader may be intrigued by possible doubts as to how the two peoples can work out a common policy if they have ruling class governments such as they have at present ; but he will be far more perturbed by the thought that the views of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., China, and India, 1,000,000,000 strong, are thus quietly moved into the background as unworthy of consideration.

The truth, of course, is that there is no possibility of any real agreement at this stage on post-war reconstruction ; it cannot be attempted on an agreed basis, and if it be attempted on any other basis it will utterly destroy the very real measure of national unity we have at present. When *The Times* writes (on April 28) that " what is needed is a programme authoritatively offered on the Government's behalf and capable of uniting the bulk of this nation," it is really telling the truth by stealth, and confessing that it cannot be done.

One may notice in passing an argument that is sometimes put forward, to the effect that these plans for reconstruction are necessary because we can better maintain morale if we know what we are fighting for. It is true that we cannot fight well unless we know what we are fighting for ; but we know that well enough. We are fighting to defeat Fascism ; we are all—with a few exceptions high-up—agreed on that. That aim transcends all others ; success in it is the pre-condition of even entertaining thoughts of any others. To inspire or confirm us in our vigorous pursuit of this aim, we do not need to be supplied with blue-prints of a new world ; news of a Second Front will be much more helpful.

It is, of course, necessary to morale to have confidence that the aim of victory in the war, and the general aims of a better world after the war—which are perhaps expressed, as fully as such aims can be expressed with general consent, in the Atlantic Charter—will be really and sincerely pursued ; but we shall not achieve that confidence by knowing that numbers of experts are preparing detailed plans. (You either trust your architect or you don't ; he cannot increase your confidence by developing his elevations and sketch plans into masses of detailed drawings and specifications.) Real solid confidence in the sincerity with which these aims are

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pursued will grow, and grow only, with the power of the working class; the more it consciously leads the nation, the more it achieves unity of the whole labour movement, international unity, and real friendship with the peoples of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., India, and China, the more confidence can we all have.

It is worth asking the question, what political motives or objects lie behind this parade of reconstruction? Suspicion is naturally aroused by such a display of zeal for the future at a time when the demand for zeal in facing immediate problems tends to exceed the supply, and of enthusiasm for planning on the part of those who have condemned such notions ever since they were first heard of. The true motives of certain sections of the government may well be their desire, whilst they are still in control with the co-operation of certain labour leaders whose views are not very different from theirs, to make as sure as they can that the post-war world shall have their shape, or at least that anyone who tries to make it a better shape shall find every imaginable obstacle in his path. (If that is indeed what they are doing, it is only the development in a wider field of their technique of so running a business or an industry—at the cost of efficiency in war service—as best to preserve and equip it for the anarchic competitive struggle for profits which they hope may still be the Disorder of the Day after the war.) Too many of them are more anxious—as were their counterparts in France—about the "enemy" at home than about the external enemy. One wonders precisely what Lord Reith had in mind when he said, in the House of Lords on February 11, 1942, "I am not frightened about the war, but I am frightened—and I think some of your Lordships are too—about the peace, frightened about what will happen after the end of the war." His words read innocently enough in their context; but these fears are worth attention.

It is in this context that we need to consider the attitude of the leading sections of the Labour Party as shown in the resolutions submitted on behalf of the Executive to the Annual Conference. The Labour Party should be the most consciously anti-Fascist of the Government parties, and should above all be vigilant to secure not only that no energy is unnecessarily diverted from the task of defeating Fascism, but also that the postponement of the demand for "Socialism now" necessarily involved in national unity should not be projected so far into the future as to disarm us for the Socialist struggle when Hitler is gone. And yet, as if seeking the worst of both worlds, they flirted for long with the idea of having no general election (*i.e.*, of leaving our destinies in the hands of an overwhelmingly Tory legislature) for several years after the war; and if that is now out of fashion they still favour—as noticed above in the case of Mr. Bevin—the maintenance of the existing monopoly controls for a term after the war. In addition, so far as they contemplate the resumption of the Socialist struggle sometime and somehow, they portray it in "The Old World and the New Society" in terms of little more than the "gas and water" of half a century ago.

The Labour Party Conference of 1942, moreover, which will be held before this article is published, is apparently expected to devote a large part of its time to reconstruction. On its agenda there are seven special resolutions put forward by its National Executive Committee, two of which had not yet been drafted when this article was written. They throw an unhappy light on the attitude of the leaders to post-war planning, and to subjects associated with it, such as the continuation of monopoly control. Of the two resolutions not yet drafted, one knows only that they are to deal with "The War and International Affairs" and "India" (and that it has apparently been impossible so far to agree their wording). The five which are already in print deal with Victory; A Planned Economic Democracy; Education; Agriculture and Food; and Social Security. The first of these is colourless, complacent, and quite vague in its terms; it contains no reference to a Second Front, and no word about the U.S.S.R. beyond "We welcome with pride the Grand Alliance of the United Nations fighting for the liberties of the world"; it contains nothing, of course, about post-war planning. The resolution on a planned economic democracy expresses the desire to carry further the "far-reaching Government control of industry, central planning of the nation's economic life, and the subordination of

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many private interests to the common good," which the Executive seems to regard as having already been carried a long way with highly satisfactory results; and it goes on to declare "that measures of government control needed for mobilising the national resources in war are no less necessary for securing their best use in peace, and must therefore be maintained after final victory is won." Is it unfair to suggest that this means that the Labour Party leaders are quite satisfied with the present infernal racket of monopoly control "in the public interest" of every industry by its own principal peacetime bosses, and are content to try to plan our post-war economy with these gentlemen sitting over the people with a gun in each hand; that they are, in short, tacitly accepting monopoly capital as the basis on which the whole reconstruction is to go forward? (That the resolution should wind up, after that, with a demand for the "socialisation of the basic industries and services of the country" is at least a tribute to somebody's sense of humour.)

The only other of the five resolutions throwing any light on our problem is that relating to "Social Security"; it cannot however detain one for long, since it is no more than a reiteration of the amiable verbiage so long the stock-in-trade of Utopians, and the only remedy it demands is that the patchwork quilt of our unnecessary poverties should be a little larger and more harmonious in pattern.

In all this there is not the slightest hope that the Labour Party leaders are prepared either to recognise the dangers of large-scale reconstruction planning now, or to keep their weapons ready for the fight for socialist planning when hostilities end. We cannot look to them to insist on this dangerous diversion of energies being stopped and the whole of our national effort being concentrated on first securing victory over Fascism.

We have to solve—and we will solve—both the problem how we shall live after the war and the problem how we shall survive now. The way to do so is to concentrate on the more immediate problem, and if we put all our energies into that we shall solve both. Let there be an end to blue-prints in the air, to all but short-range technical preparations for the post-hostilities problems. Let us put first things first, and fight Fascism with both feet on the ground and both hands on the gun.

The New Stage of the War

by WILLIAM RUST

"*The Red Army is conscious that the coming months are the most crucial for all mankind, and it is facing the titanic battle which is in the making with an unshakable resolve to achieve the complete defeat of Hitler in* 1942."

THIS statement, broadcast from Moscow at the opening of Timoshenko's offensive against Kharkov, tersely sums up the entire situation. There is now taking place on the Eastern Front the military working out of the forecast made by Stalin in his famous speech in the Red Square on November 7, 1941, that Hitler Germany would collapse within a year. The entire country, people, army and government, is unitedly fighting for the achievement of this mighty task; the initiative seized from the Germans in December has not been for one moment relaxed.

The people of Britain are deeply stirred by what Winston Churchill has called "the glory of Russia," the vision of victory and peace rises before them, and the demand for joint action becomes so powerful that no statesman dare speak without paying tribute to their spirit and the urgency and correctness of the demand for the Second Front in Europe. The opponents of the Second Front have turned tail, although opposition and intrigues have by no means ceased.

The world democratic front has now entered the period of general advance against Fascism, marked by the growing unity of the freedom-loving peoples. In the words of Stalin's Order of the Day, issued on May 1:—

> The peoples of all freedom-loving countries regard the Soviet Union as a force capable of saving the world from the Hitlerite plague. The first place among these freedom-loving countries is held by Great Britain and the U.S.A., with whom we are bound by ties of friendship and alliance, and who are rendering our country constantly increasing military assistance against the German Fascist invaders.

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But this advance and the further progress that has been made in the mobilisation of allied resources should not blind us to the marked weaknesses in the world democratic front, which Fascism will seek to turn to its advantage unless they are rapidly overcome. The March LABOUR MONTHLY emphasised what has now become even more obvious :—

> The time has come to re-cast Anglo-American strategy in accordance with the new world situation created by the Soviet victories on the Eastern Front, and to embark upon a plan, based upon a much closer co-operation between the three Powers, which will ensure the heaviest possible concentration of allied resources against the Nazi forces in Europe. This is the most urgent strategical question of the day.

That change has not yet been made, although there are numerous indications that the transition has begun. British troops are being trained for landing operations on a much more intensive scale, and invasion barges are at last being built in large numbers. Of extreme significance is the decision of the United States Government to gear up production for 1942, and to cut the construction of the war plants proposed for 1943 in order not to hamper this year's output.

But this is not yet the Second Front. Such preparations and implied assurances by members of the War Cabinet are not enough. If the Second Front was a purely military question, then the people could safely leave the decision as to when to strike the blow in the hands of the Government and the General Staffs. But this is by no means the case. The core of the opposition to the Second Front is formed by the Munichite remnants who, like the Isolationists in America, still cherish the hope that the war on the Eastern Front will result in a stalemate and a weakening of both Germany and the Soviet Union.

These elements do not head the Government of this country. Indeed, their power has been appreciably weakened as a result of the removal of Margesson and Moore-Brabazon, but they still exert a strong influence in political, economic and *military* circles, and they seek to take advantage of all anti-Soviet prejudices in order to spread confusion and indecision and to keep the Government pinned down to antiquated policies. A close study of the *Sunday Times* and *Daily Telegraph* is recommended if further light on the methods employed by these elements is required.

It would therefore be fatal to relax the mass pressure for the Second Front on the grounds that the Government has at last seen the light. The cup may yet be dashed from our lips. In fact, the anti-second fronters are already seeking to damp down the agitation on the grounds that the Government has already conceded the demand ! The *Sunday Times* goes so far as solemnly to chide the *Daily Express* for organising a public discussion meeting on the subject as " pressure upon doors already wide open is indeed neither requisite nor possible." From Lord Kemsley this argument is just a little too transparent.

The continuance of the mass agitation on the Second Front is also a preparation of the British people for the heavy tasks ahead as well as a means of driving forward the Government. This is no light-hearted demand ; it is not put forward by irresponsibles who think that it will be a cakewalk. The opening of the Second Front in Europe will be the most colossal task that the people of Britain have ever undertaken ; it will require the same courage, unity and sacrifice as our Soviet comrades-in-arms are themselves displaying. All that is done to-day to steel the nation for the coming battles is no less important than the production of the arms upon which victory depends.

It must not be forgotten that there is more than one method of disorganising the morale of a country. If the Second Front agitation is damped down and subtle " peace " manoeuvres begin to receive prominence the present exalted mood of the people might quickly be undermined. We mention this only as a possibility. The Hess mission was a failure, but that does not exclude renewed attempts, especially as there are highly-placed circles in Germany who are confident that they could reach understanding with certain of their opposite numbers in Britain.

One of the most potent arguments for the Second Front is the passion and impatience of the enslaved peoples. " The Continent awaits the signal," writes the *Pravda*. But this is also why the reactionary circles harden in their opposition to the Second Front. They fear the people, fear the new Europe that will arise from

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the overthrow of Hitlerism. They would like to prevent the coming of the renaissance.

Looking back over the last three months it is clear that the major mistake in the sphere of grand strategy has been the continued under-estimation of the striking power of the Red Army and the consequent adherence to passive defence conceptions based mainly on the defence of Empire strong points. This has meant leaving the initiative in the hands of Hitler and has resulted in a wait-and-see psychology and a speculation about what "he" will do next.

Timoshenko's forestalling of Hitler in the Ukraine actually came as a complete surprise to British commentators who, for reasons best known to themselves, had refused to treat seriously the repeated Soviet declarations that having obtained the initiative they intended to keep it. In fact, for weeks past the press had been full of dire prophecies about where the next Hitler blow would fall; most writers expected a double blow at the Caucasus and Suez, and described with considerable pride the huge British forces in the Middle East. In reality they had been immobilised there at the dictates of a passive strategy.

The *Economist* actually perpetrated the absurdity of declaring that "more and more the maelstrom of the war is moving towards the Middle East," and painted a fearful picture of a "vast encircling movement" consisting of a German prong from behind Rostov, linking up with a Japanese prong directed towards Suez.* And even Churchill, in his broadcast a few days before Timoshenko struck, made only cautious references to a "stormy lull," and by his forecasts of how our bombing of Germany would continue into the summer of 1943 rejected the Soviet slogan of victory in 1942.

This talk is expressive of policies that have done incalculable harm. Much valuable time has been lost and is still being lost. And there are still many influential elements who, because they cannot see the world canvas as a whole and the decisive significance of the Eastern Front for all fronts, are pressing sectional interests against the crying need for the concentration of all possible forces in Europe against Hitler. Whether this is due to prejudice or stupidity is not important. The result is the same: the weakening of the main blows.

The main public controversy still concerns the Pacific front, on behalf of which Dr. Evatt, the Australian Minister in London and member of the War Cabinet, made a broadcast on May 17 which took the form of an appeal for more support from Britain and America, and was by implication anti-Second Front. The seriousness of the threat hanging over Australia is unquestioned, but nothing is to be gained by exaggeration and undue pessimism.

The second stage of the Japanese offensive is not proceeding with the same rapidity as the first. And for obvious reasons. After their first successes gained by surprise, fifth column work, and extensive preparations, the Japanese are now confronted with the problem of developing an attack on Australia and India whilst maintaining tremendously extended lines and resisting the gathering strength of the allied forces. When the Chinese came to the aid of the British in Burma it was possible to organise a delaying action, which engaged considerable Japanese forces and afforded further time for the defence of India and Australia.

During this period the allied forces have been strengthened considerably, especially in the air. This has been proven by the results of the battle in the Coral Sea and the fact that the Japanese have been so far unable to capture Port Moresby and thus to consolidate their hold on New Guinea, which they need as a jumping-off ground for the invasion of Australia.

This battle was, of course, not decisive and it may be renewed at an early date. But the Australian and American naval forces which intercepted the Japanese ships succeeded in turning them back and forced their withdrawal from the area of allied operations. Most striking was the extensive use of aircraft against the Japanese; this proved one of the main factors in the battle.

* On the other hand, the holding of Rommel at the frontiers of Egypt is a considerable achievement, and Malta's valiant resistance belongs to the heroic annals of the war.

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In the opinion of the Soviet commentator, Lt. N. Sobolev :—

> The battle in the Coral Sea, of course, does not determine the outcome of the war in the Pacific. It does, however, illustrate the new quantitative and qualitative relations of forces in this theatre. It is quite obvious that in this instance the Allies proved themselves fully prepared to launch a powerful counterblow (*Soviet War News*, May 18).

In relation to India the Japanese positions have become more menacing now that Burma has fallen, although an attack through the difficult mountain frontier will certainly be impeded if not actually delayed by the monsoons. In any case, naval operations in the Bay of Bengal will now be extended and attempts may be made to effect landings at Calcutta, Madras and Ceylon. Defensive preparations are, of course, being made, and British warships and aircraft should play a decisive part in these struggles ; but the failure to reach understanding with the Indian National Congress means that the main forces for the fight against Japanese aggression—those of the Indian masses—are still denied their place in the world front of democracy.

The Viceroy, who recently made a lightning tour of Madras and Bengal, is reported to be well satisfied with the military and civil defence measures in these areas. Wavell has undoubtedly seen to it that the technical preparations are in good shape, but the political mobilisation of the masses has actually deteriorated as a result of the confusion and division caused by the Cripps visit. The refusal to establish a National Government gravely handicaps India's national struggle against the aggressors.

Nothing seems to have been learned from the lessons of Burma, where the masses were merely observers of the struggle and a section of them were even deluded into fighting on the side of the invaders, who posed as the liberators of the people. Nothing seems to have been learned from the vital role played by the Chinese troops in the defence of Burma and the amazing resilience they displayed in the final stages. The mighty achievements of the free armies of China, now facing serious difficulties as the result of the cutting of the Burma Road, are an unanswerable indictment of those reactionary policies which are still preventing the Indian people from playing their full part in their own defence under the leadership of a National Government.

But when all the dangers threatening India and Australia have been fully assessed, there is nothing to justify any policy changes that would in any way weaken the drive for the establishment of a Second Front in Europe. It may even be found necessary to divert shipping from the East for this purpose. The risk would be justified as decisive successes in Europe—and these could be achieved by the autumn before the Japanese offensive reached its full force—would bring down the main prop of world Fascism and permit a rapid concentration of allied armies, ships and planes on the Pacific Front. Japan's shipping problem could under these circumstances rapidly become acute, as owing to the limited capacity of the shipyards it is possible for the Allies to sink far more ships than the Japanese could build.

There has been much speculation in the press on the possibility of a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union, and in some cases the wish appears to be father to the thought. It should be remembered, however, that the Red Army in Siberia is well supplied and in fine fettle, and that the Japanese still remember their clash with it in 1938 and 1939. The Tokio military leaders are not anxious to repeat the experience, especially as they now have a few other fronts on their hands.

American opinion is, of course, vitally concerned with the Japanese danger, and well understands that the Soviet strength in the Far East is a leaden ball on Japan's foot, which limits its jumps. The influence of President Roosevelt and General Marshall has been wisely exerted on the side of those who stand for the European concentration precisely because they see this as the most effective counter to Japan at the present stage. The increasing American participation in the war is now very noticeable : United States troops and airmen are arriving in Britain in increasing numbers, units of the American navy are operating in the Mediterranean, and Lease-Lend deliveries have been extended to all fronts, including Persia and Iraq. Also, the drop in the deliveries to the Soviet Union has been checked.

A sharpening of American relations with Vichy in reply to the elevation of Laval is also observable. The British

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occupation of Madagascar — a well-planned operation which helps to safeguard shipping in the Indian Ocean—was firmly supported by the United States Government, which warned Vichy that any warlike acts would be regarded as hostile to the United States. Since then Roosevelt has firmly insisted on the demilitarisation of the French warships at Martinique and has not permitted its High Commissioner to enter into consultations with Vichy.

This action was necessary because of the danger of the base being used by the U-boats which are now operating all along the Atlantic seaboard. All steps to check the U-boat menace are to be welcomed as sinkings continue to be dangerously high, and the surface raiders are also increasingly active; determined attacks have now begun against the Murmansk convoys.

This, in brief, is the background of the other fronts and their relationship to the main Eastern front, where the operations at present in process may be judged in the light of the results of the winter campaign and the experiences of the first days of the offensive against Kharkov.

The lessons of the first days of the offensive fully confirm the main conclusions drawn by the Soviet commentators from the winter campaign, namely, that:

The Red Air Force has established mastery in the air, and the Stormovik dive bombers are particularly effective.

The Soviet tanks are superior in quality, although not in numbers.

The Soviet artillery is stronger and more accurate than the German.

So far as man-power and morale is concerned, the advantage is all on the side of the Red Army. The full significance of the steady pressure maintained all through the winter months is now to be seen; the Nazi reserves, both men and tanks, have been eaten into and the myth of invincibility has been blown sky-high. On the other hand, the Red Army has accumulated invaluable experience, strengthened its morale and has trained mighty new reserve armies.

The unspectacular character of much of the winter fighting did not reveal these basic changes to the superficial observer, with the result that much of the comment in the British press was negative in character. The *Sunday Times* has actually expressed the conclusion that the Russian troops "are better in defence than in attack," and referred to the "failure before fortresses" shown by the Red Army.

It is most extraordinary that certain commentators should insist on their own ill-informed and prejudiced views, rather than accept the extremely careful summing-up made by Stalin himself. In his May 1 Order of the Day he stated:—

> The invaders' plans to take advantage of the winter for a respite and for consolidating their positions on their defence line suffered a fiasco. In the course of its offensive the Red Army annihilated enormous quantities of enemy man-power and equipment, captured from the enemy a rather large quantity of equipment, and compelled him to expend prematurely reserves from the distant rear destined for the spring and summer operations.

A reference to the map is sufficient to show that the winter campaign not only created safety zones around Leningrad, Moscow and Rostov, but also enabled a number of thrusts forward to be made, resulting in the encirclement of large forces and the besieging of a number of strong points. In the North a strong thrust was made towards Velikie Luki, and Staraya Russa was encircled; in the Centre a large pocket was created; and in the South the ground gained towards the Dnieper bend has made possible the present offensive against Kharkov. In short, as a result of the winter campaign the Red Army succeeded in gaining favourable strategical positions.

The German High Command was in a cleft stick: either to expend the spring reserves by holding on to various strong points and vital communications at all costs, or to save men and equipment at the price of these positions. It chose the former, but in so doing did not alter the course of the war.

Hitler has revealed that during the winter "breaking point" was reached, but the spring and the summer will not bring relief to his forces. On the contrary. He is suffering from a shortage of man-power, of oil and raw materials. The threatened use of gas is the measure of his desperation. The Nazi morale is going down while the Red Army morale is going up. The scattered guerilla forces are now co-ordinated and working together as an army.

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The Red Army possesses everything necessary for the liberation of Soviet soil, declared Stalin on May 1, except the "ability to make full use against the enemy of the first-rate armament supplied to it by our motherland." This knowledge is, however, being acquired with extreme rapidity.

Thus the perspective is clear—victory this year. But let there be no underestimation of the enemy, and the magnitude of the tasks before us. The German Army is far from being destroyed ; every inch of ground will have to be fought for, and progress will not be even and unbroken. The growth of any tendencies in Britain to sit back and leave it to the Red Army would be fatal to our own interests, would prolong the war and enormously increase the sacrifice.

The time has come for the opening of the Second Front and all resistance must be swept on one side. The arguments of the anti-second fronters have been cut from under their feet. What are the plain facts ? There is no longer the danger of the invasion of this country, and even the blitz has been reduced to the short-lived Baedeker raids. Also, the fighting on the Eastern Front has again relieved the pressure on the Middle East.

Britain and America are in a position to strike in Europe : the commando raids have accumulated valuable experience. What then is delaying action ? Attachment to the alternative policy of the intensive air bombing of vital German centres ? Emphasis has been laid on this by Churchill, but by now everybody knows that although bombing may cause dislocation and also have the effect of undermining morale, it cannot possibly win the war. Germany can only be defeated on land, and it is to this strategic purpose that the aerial superiority, which now exists in both the East and West, should be devoted.

Britain's greatest opportunity is now before it. If the blow is struck in Europe now, all that has been lost can be regained, the enemy can be driven back on all fronts and final victory can be achieved.

Coal and the Nation's War Effort

by A. L. HORNER

COAL has once again taken its place in the forefront of the problems now confronting the Government. A critical situation has developed which, if not attended to, will inevitably result in a grave shortage in coal supplies for industry and the civil population. Such a state of things would be calamitous and would seriously impede the whole national effort at a time when so much depends upon the effective operation of industry generally, and especially the war industries. Without adequate supplies of coal, essential industries would come to a stop and the people would be affected detrimentally by cold and darkness.

It is no longer a secret that the amount of coal produced in the country is considerably below the amount which is vital in the present situation. Various explanations have been given to this deplorable condition of affairs. Actually, however, it has come about because of war developments which are inescapable and because of the failure of all concerned to discover measures by which war conditions could be outbalanced by new methods of production.

The main and by far the most important explanation for the failure of the industry is the shortage of man-power. Following the fall of France in June, 1940, many thousands of miners became redundant, and only optimists expected that the time would come when the man-power of the industry would be insufficient to produce the coal necessary for the home market, the foreign markets having almost completely disappeared. At the time there was considerable dissatisfaction amongst miners who were rendered unemployed and who were compelled to endeavour to maintain existence on the inadequate unemployment benefit scales. The officials of the Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain and the District Unions, as well as miners' Members of Parliament, insistently demanded that the men should be released so that they could work in other industries and so earn wages which would enable them to enjoy a reasonable standard of life. Scores of thousands were

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ultimately released and quickly attached themselves to more congenial work in other war industries. Thousands of mine-workers with jobs in the pits have been attracted to these war industries by the advantageous conditions obtaining in comparison with those prevailing in the mining industry.

This loss of man-power came as a relief at the time to those responsible for the conditions of miners, both employed and unemployed. There were a few people even then who considered that it would again be necessary to employ increased numbers of miners in the pits, and the man who most frequently expressed this view was Mr. D. R. Grenfell, the present Secretary of Mines. It is because of the expectation that coal production would have to be speeded up as new war industries developed that redundant mines were maintained ready for production by means of finances provided through a special levy on coal. These mines are still available and, in the majority of cases, given the man-power, operations could commence in them almost immediately.

Mining man-power, however, can only be secured from the ranks of ex-mine-workers. It is not possible to take, from the ranks of general labour, men who are trained to work and safeguard their lives in underground conditions. This explains the clamour for the return of ex-mine-workers from the Armed Forces as well as from war industries. It should be pointed out that amongst the reservists and the Territorials called up at the commencement of the war, many thousands came from the mining industry. Many of them are non-commissioned officers now, whilst others occupy vital positions in the Armed Forces after nearly three years of intensive training.

To secure the return of ex-miners to the mining industry is an extremely difficult task. Those employed in other industries offer the strongest objection to being compelled to resume employment in the mining industry. This is understandable in view of the arduous and dangerous work which mineworkers are called upon to perform. It is true that a certain percentage of the men now in the Armed Forces express their desire to come back to the mines, and this is mainly because they are performing futile work now in the Armed Forces for an income which is considerably less than that which they could earn in the mining industry.

The worst feature, however, of the man-power problem in the mining industry is the heavy annual wastage due to death, illness, accident, disease, old age and physical incapacity to carry on the difficult manual work involved in mining operations. In normal times losses were replaced by the entry into the industry of boys upon leaving school. Even before the war serious opposition was offered, both by parents and the boys themselves, to arrangements for the entry of mine-workers' sons into the pits. This was due to opportunities for other employment and to fears that the boys would be compelled to work in a trade in which there would be no guarantee of continuous employment during adult life.

It should be pointed out that, whilst mining is one of the most highly skilled trades for which long experience is necessary, the skill acquired cannot be utilised in the work which they might be called upon to perform outside the mining industry, if the mining industry could no longer offer them employment. In the years of depression, unemployed miners became the unskilled labour for the light industries. Miners, who have a special pride in their skill, resent becoming hewers of wood and drawers of water to the skilled men of other trades. There is, of course, the additional objection on the part of parents because of the very considerable risk which is involved in mining. Every mining village contains a considerable number of men who have been injured, or who suffer from chest diseases due to dust in mines, and who simply eke out a miserable existence waiting to die.

In spite, however, of all the difficulties, additional man-power for the mining industry can only be obtained from these three categories: the Armed Forces, the war industries, and from boys leaving school. It is with deep reluctance that we face the task of securing these men and boys when we are fully aware that they have a condition of life and a prospect far better than that which the mining industry offers, even though the mining industry improved the conditions of the workers employed within it out of all recognition. Mining will always be dirty, difficult, drab and dangerous, although much can be done to make it better

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The obvious solution to the problem of the shortage of man-power in the mining industry is to make the work in it as congenial as possible and to raise the standard of life to a much higher level. It is elementary, therefore, that if there is to be satisfaction amongst the personnel of the industry, wages will have to be raised to accord with those which are being paid in other, often less essential, industries. The demand for 2s. per day increase is well merited, and it should be conceded without argument or further ado. Additional wage rates would compensate the men returning from other industries for some of the inconvenience and difficulties they are asked to face. It would give a measure of satisfaction to those now employed, and would help the men now returning from the Forces.

The Commission which has been established under the chairmanship of Sir John Forster, to investigate the employment of boys in the mining industry, will be presented with evidence which, I am sure, will be conclusive in so far as it will prove that the entry of boys into the industry is conditional upon better wages for those boys, greater regard for their safety, and guarantee of employment when they become men and when they undertake responsibilities as fathers of families. I write with knowledge of the opinions of my colleagues when I state that no responsible mining official will concur in the direction of boys to the mining industry, boys who we know will come from the mining villages and be the sons of mineworkers, unless revolutionary changes in the terms and conditions of their employment are brought about.

The solution of the man-power question is the key without which it is impossible to produce the quantity of coal required to meet the minimum needs of the country in the present situation. If, in addition to home consumption, demands are made for coal for our allies, as I fully expect them to be made, then the securing of men and boys is the most urgent task before the country. Even though man-power is secured on conditions which can be regarded as satisfactory, it will still be essential to ensure that it is effectively used in the most intelligent and scientific fashion. I am personally convinced that the industry is incapable of doing this under conditions of private ownership. The elements which now control the industry are mutually contradictory and, because of post-war expectations, there is still the same jealous regard for the vested interests of each particular unit within the industry. In addition there is the profit element which prevents the full collaboration from mineworkers which is essential to the best results from the industry.

Experience of the years since the last war have burned themselves into the very bones of mineworkers and their families. The destitution of unemployment in the days when miners were unwanted men, the ruthless punishment which they sustained in the course of the national lockouts as well as in the innumerable smaller ones, have all left their mark so that even the most moderate mineworker becomes a rebel when confronted with the obligation to produce profits for the mineowners. The question of production in the mining industry depends not only upon the means to produce in the sense that men and materials are necessary, but equally upon the mineworkers' will to produce. The profit element must, therefore, be removed.

The Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain would have found it easy to propagandise for full nationalisation of the mining industry to secure this result. Because of the exigencies of the war, however, and the understandings between the parties now composing the Government of the country, we have not insisted, although we have advocated and sought support for the adoption of Labour's Plan for the Nationalisation of the Mining Industry. We have, however, presented a scheme with the full support of the Labour Movement which, if adopted, will remove the profit element for the duration of the war, and as well will make possible a co-ordinated effort to exploit coal production to the maximum. This plan if adopted will have the advantage of removing all justification for anxiety lest such efforts and sacrifices as mineworkers are called upon to make will be used for the advantage of mineowners, instead of the country as a whole. It is well known that there is considerable opposition to this scheme. It is understandable, when regard is had to the fears of vested interests concerning its present and future position. If the industry is now taken under the control of a National Coal

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Board, working through Regional Boards, properly constituted pit production committees will be given decisive powers over production in the pit at which members of the Pit Production Committees are employed.

Suggestions have been made by various individuals that mining hours should be increased at least to those which obtained during the last war, *i.e.*, that the 7½ hours exclusive of winding time shall now become 8 hours exclusive of winding time; in other words, that the hours of labour, including descending and ascending the pit, shall on the average be approximately 9 hours instead of approximately 8½ hours as at present. This proposition would only be looked at by mineworkers if every other possibility had been exhausted and if there was no course open to the industry except this, and at a time when the fate of the country depended upon the production which increased hours might give. I write "might" advisedly, for production in the last war was less per man-shift than in this war. The years of struggle to win the 7-hour day exclusive of winding time has never been forgotten, the imposition of the 7½-hour day when the miners were weak and disorganised will never be forgiven, and it is the miners' intention never to rest until the 7-hour day which was stolen from them has been restored. It is futile, therefore, for interested parties to make gestures towards extending the length of the mining day for mineworkers, because to do so, when so many other alternatives are open, is to entitle the miner to believe that the necessities of the situation are being utilised to enforce longer hours by trading upon the patriotism of the mineworker.

It is certain that before this war is ended, many sacrifices will be called for from miners as well as from the rest of the community. I am sure that when the situation demands sacrifices from mineworkers, and the justification for them has been clearly established, the miners will be ready to carry their fair share of the burden, ensuring that others do similarly.

Proposals to solve the problem by palliatives, such as concentration upon the most prolific mines, cannot possibly by themselves meet the needs of the situation. It is possible that a measure of concentration is justifiable and may be essential if we are to secure immediate supplies of coal in sufficient quantities for all purposes. If and when this policy of concentration is put into operation, regard will have to be paid to the social consequences which will be the inevitable result of transplanting thousands of men from their present homes in order that they might work under different conditions in coalfields which they have never previously known. The National Board would be able, when organising such transference, to make the necessary provision so that the burden to the workman affected and the effects upon his family would be reduced to the absolute minimum.

An attempt to economise in the utilisation of coal is elementary common sense at a time when the need is so great and the man-power to meet the need so inadequate. I am not proposing in this article to examine details of the Government's Rationing Scheme, but this must be agreed, that rationing in the last resort is the only means of ensuring equality in distribution between rich and poor when any commodity is in short supply. If, however, it is the intention of certain elements to seek escape from reorganisation of the industry through resort to economy in the use of coal, such elements must understand that any support offered by miners to the principle of rationing will be accompanied by even stronger support for reorganisation and the maximum productive efficiency within the industry. Rationing, however stringent, will fail by itself to outweigh the shortage of production.

The miners generally are producing at the coal face an amount per head only slightly below that which they produced before the war. At the same time, however, the output per man-shift employed has been considerably reduced due to the lower percentage of coal face workers as compared to the total number employed, and to the increased percentage of higher-aged men. Present results have been maintained in spite of war conditions. It is nonsense to pretend that the anxiety and the strain of the war has permitted the men to retain the same degree of vitality as they possessed prior to the war. Arrangements for industrial feeding are far more difficult to fix up in the mining industry than in industry in general. When only 20 minutes

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is allowed for meal time, and when many mineworkers are working miles from the pit bottom it is impossible for them to come out to have proper sit-down meals after the manner of factory workers, workers in ship yards, etc. It is a long and difficult process to create canteens and to organise them in a manner that could give comparable results with those now established especially in modern armament factories.

In addition it must be realised that restriction in the importation of timber has compelled the industry to carry on with home-grown timber. Foreign timber was imported into this country for the maintenance of roof supports underground because it is the most suitable for the purpose. It is the best form of roof support, and the easier timber to work with in every way. The utilisation of home-grown timber about which the industry cannot afford to be selective has slowed down that part of a miner's work which determines the nature of the support over his head whilst he is hundreds of yards beneath the ground. It is true that special measures have been taken to endeavour with some success to increase supplies of steel as alternative support. There has been some objection to the turnover from timber to steel, whether justifiable or otherwise must be determined by actual conditions in each seam or pit.

With the increase in mechanisation the industry has become more dependent upon spare parts of machinery so that breakdowns can be quickly repaired in a satisfactory fashion. Shortage of spare parts makes improvisation necessary to a much greater extent than before, with the result that breakdowns are more frequent, and this of course slows down production. Many of those deficiencies are inevitable in a war such as the country is now engaged in; the difficulties, however, are infinitesimal compared with those which confront the workers of our Russian Ally, and especially the miners of the Soviet Union.

Given the necessary guarantees that the efforts of the miners will benefit the country and will assist our allies, British mineworkers must be ready to express a capacity for sacrifice, and to unleash a degree of initiative in production which will startle the country.

The country must now fearlessly face the coal situation. It must authorise measures unprecedented in the history of the industry. It must not be afraid of pre-war prejudice, or post-war interests; everything must be sacrificed to the struggle to achieve victory this year. Mineworkers must realise that defeat in the war would bring calamities upon the mining community too horrible to contemplate. We must fully understand that the defeat of the Axis Powers is an essential pre-requisite to the realisation of all we stand for and to all possibilities for improving working and living conditions.

The Government must grasp the nettle now; it must act quickly so that fears of coal shortage and possible crisis may be set on one side, thus enabling the whole effort of the nation to be concentrated in one common united effort to defeat the enemy and secure victory as quickly as possible.

COMING OF AGE

No festivities, film shows, rallies or other junketings will mark our twenty-first birthday, which takes place in July this year. Nor shall we print seven pages of birthday greetings as we did for our "twentieth." The war situation and the paper shortage forbid it. But our work goes on, and we need more and more money to help us do it.

We look back wistfully at our twentieth birthday total: it was £156 15s. 6d. We said then: "Make it a birthday every month," but our hopes were far from realised.

You who have never contributed to the Development Fund, and who for that reason, we believe, do not read the Development Fund page, will probably read this, simply because it is in the text and you can hardly miss it. Will you consider very carefully whether you can afford not to help our fund? And having decided, reach out immediately towards the most convenient method of parting with money: fountain pen and cheque book, Money Order or Postal Order, or merely the humble book of stamps! Do not, of course, send coin through the post, but if you can call and see us we shall be very pleased to accept it personally!

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India for Action

by V. K. KRISHNA MENON

INDIA calls for action ! Japan, hitherto unhalted in her career of brigandage and conquest since the attack on Pearl Harbour, now claims to have crossed the Indian border through Burma. China has lost the Burma Road and now the new Assam by-way is threatened. Allied communications eastward to the far Pacific via the Bay of Bengal are menaced by Japan's sea-power in the Bay, by her control of Burma ports, and the imminent peril to Indian harbours and ports on the Bay. Eastwards Japan's surface and undersea craft have destroyed shipping in the Arabian Sea, thus severely challenging the supply routes from India or through Indian bases to the Middle East, Iran and to the U.S.S.R. via the Persian Gulf. This sea route, vital to allied strategy and strength, though menaced, is still not out of commission though increasingly endangered. The danger, however, increases with Japanese control of Indian ports and of supply sources.

India herself is threatened by land and sea and has already been attacked from the air. At the moment the Japanese forces, which have overcome Allied opposition in Burma, appear to be moving northward to China, a process which the weakness of the Indian flank of the Chinese sector of the war has facilitated. India herself is gravely menaced. Her defence, vital to her people, has therefore emerged as the main factor in policy decisions. While the defence and the safety of India is vital to the Indian people, it is no minor factor in allied strategy or in the calculations of a victory this year and to the cause of the United Nations as a whole.

This realisation dominated the minds of the leaders of the Indian National Congress in their talks with Sir Stafford Cripps at New Delhi. It conditioned their approach to the British proposals, both in concessions and insistences ; it also resulted in the final breakdown. For the leaders of the Indian people regard the whole-hearted participation of the Indian masses, with their passions and enthusiasms unleashed, the only realistic and effective form of defence to-day. India must be defended, says Nehru, as China and the Soviet Union have shown how to do effectively. A hundred million men and women engaged in that task is Nehru's own conception of defence under a national government and carried out by the people. British policy in industry, government, military organisation and the general effect of political subjection for over a century makes this task a breathless race against time, and sets severe limits to Indian achievement in this direction, even if obstacles were removed now. It also makes improvisation, unconventional methods and the plentiful use of indigenous initiative vital to success. It demands that the new Indian effort shall look not only to British but to other sources for industrial, organisational and military co-operation and inspiration. It prescribes the release of the people as the essential conditions for its achievement.

Malaya, Singapore and Burma each fell to Japan even more quickly than was feared. The leadership, organisation and methods planned and provided by the Empire proved of no avail. It did not sustain morale. Its fighting forces were confined to the brave armies and garrisons imported for the purpose which, like the government itself, had no roots in the people. There was no popular resistance to the invaders. The people were not called to arms. They had none. Their rulers did not consider them relevant to a nation's resistance. In peace they were the Empire's chattels. In war they were condemned to the same servitude. True, in Singapore the workers demonstrated and demanded arms ; in Malaya, the Communist Party, composed of Malayans, Chinese and Indians, called to the people to rally against invaders and for the weapons of defence. But this, the only anti-Fascist call to the people, was neither soon enough nor powerful enough to stem the tide of invasion.

The governments of Malaya, instead of seeing in these forces the vital elements of popular resistance and rallying them, had outlawed and suppressed them. In Burma, we are now told by British correspondents, the people do not know what they are fighting for. The Japanese found Burmese guides to take them through jungle paths while the British found the

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masses of the people apathetic, unconcerned and unaware of what the whole business was about! Popular leaders, including Liberals, Communists and Peasant leaders, are (or were) in British prisons. British correspondents tell us now that the civil administration failed, and that the government did nothing to win Burman support. While the people were thus cordoned off from the fight for their country the Empire carried on the ineffective resistance, which has so far failed.

These events are recent; their consequences bitter and tragic.

India, though faced by imminent peril, finds her powerful national forces isolated from participation in defence and for the most part rendered sterile. From the outbreak of the war the Indian National Movement has striven to achieve this co-operation, as it considered Fascism an enemy of the people. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war, the graver dangers that threaten China, and the national unity in America and Britain in the war against the Axis, augmented Indian desires. The working-class movement in India, which at the outbreak of the war initiated strikes as a protest against the enforced entry of India into what was then a fully imperialist war, now declared its solidarity with the U.S.S.R. and all other peoples fighting Fascism and demanded that the conditions of work and government in India should be transformed immediately so that Indian production and effort might be increased. The peasants and the national movement generally reflected this change in their abandonment of non-co-operation. The Japanese advance intensified Indian efforts in voluntary directions for the protection of the people. These are the only substantial efforts in India to-day. Congress instructed co-operation with Government officials and all others interested in the same objects. This could easily have become a powerful national front if the British Government did not continue to obstruct and live in what is now criminal obscurantism.

Its own policies continued to be the rallying of sycophants and the creation of greater disunities in India. Mr. Amery surpassed his predecessors in his achievements for exasperating Indian opinion. The political maturity of the Indian national movement, however, prevented it from being side-tracked into suicidal petulance. Led by Nehru and Azad, the Congress called on the people to prepare resistance and anti-Fascist propaganda. They repeated their readiness to undertake the defence of India if a National Government were established. After fourteen months of enforced suspension by the imprisonment of its leaders, Congress adopted policies which were courageous and realistic. They provided a basis of settlement. It led to the retirement of Mr. Gandhi from leadership. Neither the Government of India nor the British Government, however, made any effort to respond. Instead they continued to function as though nothing had changed since the days of Lord North until finally Japan inflicted rude shocks on the Governments in London and Washington. New Delhi lives farther away from Singapore, Rangoon and Akyab than does Whitehall. Public opinion in this country became increasingly concerned. China took a hand. Chiang Kai-Shek, invited to India by the Viceroy, spent the greater part of his time with the Indian leaders, and on leaving appealed to the British Government and the British people to transfer real political power to India. The British Government was feeling also the draught of Liberal American sentiment which it tried hard to counteract by misrepresentation and propaganda, using its missionaries, officials and radio for the purpose. Mr. Amery excelled himself by grave distortions of history in his answers to responsible American publicists. The culminating effect of all these factors was the Cripps Mission.

It came to grief because of its inherent and fundamental defects. At this stage, it is needless to analyse the proposals which Sir Stafford Cripps took to India. They are irrelevant to the issues immediately before us. All that is important is that they contained no suggestions which would alter substantially the character of Indian administration at present which alone would enable the rallying of India and the releasing of her vital energies and resources. They contained no proposals for India's future status which would galvanise Indian feeling. On the contrary, they were built on the basis of "divide and rule." They were planned by the

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Ulster mind. They were conceived in terms of delaying actions to meet the onslaughts of united India. In any case, they were all about a world after the war.

In its resolution, however, Congress decided and stated that its own attitude to any proposals would be determined by the nature of the proposals affecting the present Government of India and their potency to render India's defence effective and popular. On the face of it the British document contained no such proposals, but Sir Stafford gave the Congress leaders to understand that the British draft permitted of accommodation on the basis of a National Government subject to the reservation of defence. The latter, therefore, became the pivot of negotiation.

Nehru and Azad strove patiently for a settlement. They passionately desired one. They waived their objections about the future. They accepted compromises on the issue of National Government and defence which was the central feature of any interim settlement. They agreed to accept a British war minister in the Indian National Government in the person of the Commander-in-Chief, with an Indian defence minister who, they said, should have real powers. This was Sir Stafford's formula, but when the defence functions were formulated they were found to be trivial. Nehru called them comic. But, the negotiations failed because at this stage Sir Stafford informed the Congress that a National Government was impossible. The Viceroy, who till now, he had said, would function as a constitutional head, would have to be a Prime Minister instead. He would be the political head of the Government. He would choose his colleagues. The agreement as to the limitations that he would impose on his wide, autocratic powers, the extent to which he would be bound by advice, the relations between him and the other ministers as a whole and other such vital matters, these, Sir Stafford said, the Viceroy alone could decide. They lay entirely within his discretion. Sir Stafford would remain in India to facilitate the discussions. The member of the British War Cabinet who, till then, was a British plenipotentiary who, contrary to established custom, took up residence at New Delhi outside the Viceregal Lodge to gain direct contact with the Indian leaders, now suddenly assumed the role of honest broker between the Viceroy and the leaders of the Indian people. The negotiations broke down. The British " offer " proved to be substantially the same as the present structure of administration, and the same plan as is contained in the Amery declaration of August 8, 1940. There was to be no National Government. Sir Stafford continued to call the Viceroy's Council a National Government !

The mission having failed, the British plenipotentiary returned ; but, before leaving India, did far more damage than the failure itself by raising issues which clouded the realities. He, however, showed no originality in this, which is the measure of the unreality of the accusations. It was the old tale of Indian disunities once again ! It was said that the Congress position amounted to a demand for the dictatorship of a tyrannical majority. It was argued that a National Government would be responsible only to the main political parties in India. Sir Stafford said also that he " felt confident " that no other party in India (but the Congress) would agree to the plan of a truly National Government. Each of Sir Stafford's objections can be met by conclusive argument. He has provided the answers himself. Speaking on this very question in the House of Commons on October 26, 1939, and answering the imperialist spokesmen whose brief he has now accepted, he said :—

> It is true that, technically and in accordance with the constitution, the Executive Council would not be a Cabinet, but there is no reason on earth why our Government should not give an undertaking that the Viceroy would deal with that Executive Council, so appointed from the members of the majority of the Legislative Assembly, as if it were a Cabinet on all major matters—that is to say, he would accept their advice as the Crown here accepts the advice of the Cabinet when duly tendered to it.
>
> On the basis of that immediate rearrangement, and on the basis of our pledge to grant self-government after the war, we could, I believe, with safety and confidence, invite the whole-hearted co-operation of the Indian people in our effort to establish democracy and freedom in the world, of which determination we should have given an earnest by our willingness to co-operate with India in winning her freedom and democracy at the earliest possible moment. That declaration would not only, I believe, win the support of all British India, but would be acclaimed throughout the world as a great act of a great and sincere democratic people.

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In an intervention in the recent House of Commons debate Sir Stafford admitted that he did not discuss the communal question with the Congress during the negotiations for a National Government. Maulana Azad, on the other hand, asserts that the Congress was asking for a National Government for India and not for the Congress, and would have overcome such difficulties as might have occurred if Britain agreed to the transfer of effective power.

It would appear from all that has happened that the British Government was afraid that there might be a settlement and that the popular forces of India would assume power. It beat a hasty retreat to prepared positions.

The mission has failed. It has created much bitterness and cynical disillusionment. It has weakened the hand of those in Congress who strove patiently for a settlement to enable India to participate effectively in the fight against the Axis. It has increased Indian suspicions. It has demonstrated to India that the British Government does not intend to part with the reality of power.

What next? Sir Stafford has followed up his failure with the announcement that nothing more can be done. This is the present British policy. It is defeatist and calamitous.

In India there is a grave deterioration of the situation. Reactionary elements have gained what the people have lost. Autocratic government continues, sanctioned once again last month by Parliament. Political adventurers like M. N. Roy, whose name is now mentioned for a place in the Viceroy's Council, emerge anew as anti-Fascist champions, the exponents of national unity and of realism in politics. He finds support in Earl Winterton, in *The Times* and in the *Statesman* of Calcutta. The determination to resist the invader and to fight Fascism, to which the people were called by Azad and Nehru, cannot find full expression or effective forms.

Japan approaches Eastern Bengal, where, in many districts, there is not a home which has not felt the hand of police repression during the last 35 years without a break. Political leaders are still in prison. A great many of them, Communists and other anti-Fascists, are the very people who, despite the obscurantism of the British Government, would rally the people in resistance and prevent a repetition of the experience of Burma.

A National Government in India now is a supreme and desperate necessity. The forces of the people and the State must be united. Disunity spells disaster to India. It weakens the cause of the United Nations.

We must act now! The Government must be compelled to reopen negotiations immediately on the basis of the recognition of the national independence of India and the agreement to the formation of a National Government.

A settlement can then be reached. It may even at this late hour avert disaster.

The New Budget

by JOHN KNIGHT

THE new Budget is equally significant for its revenue and for its expenditure side. In fact, the latter makes it unique in the history of British war Budgets. At first sight this uniqueness is not obvious :—

Total Expenditure in £ Millions*			
1939–1940	...	...	1,821.0
1940–1941	...	...	3,884.3
1941–1942†	...	...	4,787.9
1941–1942	...	...	4,775.7
1942, January/March‡			5,119.6
1942–1943†	...	...	5,286.5

* Excluding self-balancing Revenue and Expenditure (Post Office and Broadcasting).

† Estimate. ‡ Annual rate.

The first full year of war brought a very rapid increase in expenditure. Naturally, the increase slowed down from 1940–41 to 1941–42—although, as we know from the production results, the increase ought not to have slowed down at the rate shown above. But what about the rate of increase from 1941–42 to 1942–43? It is almost infinitesimal. A paltry £167 millions, an increase of about 3 per cent. Can one call this an "increased war effort"?!

But this is not all. Let us look more closely at the Budget figures. If we deduct from the total ordinary expenditure the consolidated fund services—that is, the expenditure for interest and management

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of the National Debt and some minor items of a similar kind—then we get what is called the supply services. How have the expenses for the supply services developed? Perhaps the payments for interest have declined to such an amount that the expenditure for the war effort has increased considerably more than the above figures indicate.

Expenditure: Supply Services (£ millions)

1941–1942	4,501.6
1942, January/March*	4,952.1
1942–1943	4,944.2

This table is even more discouraging than the above one. It shows that the new Budget not only means a rapid lowering of the rate of increase of war expenditure, but that it is intended that *the expenditure on the prosecution of the war is to decline as compared with that prevailing during the first quarter of* 1942. It seems that the Government intends, for the first time in the history of Britain, to enter a new financial year of war with the avowed purpose of flagging in its war effort. Or as *The Economist*, April 18, expresses it more "neutrally":—

For the forthcoming year the Chancellor has built his proposals on the assumption that supply service expenditure will be a few millions below the annual rate actually achieved in the quarter January to March, 1942.

But even the above table does not fully indicate the situation. Let us for a moment leave the Budget and look at the development of wholesale prices. *The Economist*'s index of wholesale prices during the half-year from September to March—that is, the half-year preceding the Budget—has moved as follows:—

Wholesale Prices
1929 equals 100

September, 1941 ...	115.9
October	116.2
November	116.2
December	117.4
January, 1942	117.7
February	118.9
March	119.4

During the six months under review the index of wholesale prices has increased by about 3½ per cent.—an annual rate of about 7 per cent. Assuming that wholesale prices continue to increase at this rate, and that the index roughly indicates the increase of prices which the Government has to pay, we arrive at the conclusion that the Budget indicates a flagging of the war effort, which amounts to at least three and a half weeks' war work.

But can we expect that the price rise will not be larger than during the last half-year? Nobody can assert that there is a large-scale inflation to-day. But with equally little right can one say that there are *no inflationary tendencies at all?* Rightly, *The Economist*, April 18, remarks:—

It is very difficult to resist the conclusion that there must have been some inflationary element in the finance of 1941, amounting perhaps to a few hundreds of millions of pounds.

It is equally difficult to resist the conclusion that this inflationary gap will slightly widen in the next year. Such a slight widening is not dangerous yet. But it will naturally accelerate somewhat the increase in prices. It is extremely improbable that so astute a financier as the Chancellor is not expecting such a slight widening of the inflationary gap. That means that one must reckon with a somewhat larger increase of prices than the above-mentioned 7 per cent. And that means that one must reckon with an even larger decline of the war effort than the above figures indicate.

This does not necessarily mean that Britain will have fewer weapons accruing than last year. Supplies from the United States on Lease-Lend and gifts from the Dominions are not included in the above Budget. But it means—and that is a terribly grave charge as far as our own war effort is concerned—that it is expected to decline. And that at a time when our Soviet allies are putting every ounce of their strength into an increased war effort, when the United States are rapidly increasing their production, when China is directly assisting us to an increasing degree, and when our mortal enemy, German Fascism, is trying to whip the oppressed peoples on the Continent to ever greater efforts!

* * *

The revenue side of the Budget must make every progressive despondent. There have been some slight but totally inadequate improvements in the collection of the income tax among wage earners. In spite of strong representations on the part of labour and also by employer organs,

* Annual rate.

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such as the *Financial News*, the chief concessions made in respect of the income tax are : the minimum amounts of weekly income exempted from tax collection have been raised to £2 for a single and to £5 for a married taxpayer with two or more children ; some relief in the method of tax collecting has been introduced for the seasonal industries ; the maximum additional allowance for married women's earnings is raised from £45 to £80.

Against these concessions which bypass almost all the complaints of the workers and which do very little to bring relief from much injustice, there are other tax measures which can only be described as doing everything to increase the inequality of sacrifice. All these measures come under the heading of " increased duties " : increased duties on tobacco and beer, on cinema seats and (in the form of an increased purchase tax) on numerous articles of daily use are the chief burdens put on the masses of the people.

The Chancellor introduced most of these measures not so much for the income which they provide than as a measure of further restricting consumption. Now nobody will oppose a restriction of consumption in the interest of an increased war effort. But firstly, this Budget does not provide for an increased war effort. On the contrary, we are confronted with the astonishing fact that *this Budget provides on the one hand for a diminished war effort, and at the same time for a further tightening of the belts—in the interest of a flagging war effort* ? ! This, however, is not all. For secondly, the tightening of the belt is arranged in such a way that those who already in peace time and much more so in recent years have had much too tight a belt are forced to tighten it even more. The increased duty takes now tobacco, for instance, completely out of the reach of hundreds of thousands and cuts sharply the consumption of millions of others who have few pleasures in life—while those with an income of, let us say, £500 and more do not need to cut their consumption at all. That is, consumption for the poor is cut off completely or severely restricted while consumption for the rich is not touched at all.

Nobody must misunderstand us. While it may be necessary to curtail the consumption of tobacco or beer in the interest of an increased war effort—and in this case we would be 100 per cent. for such a curtailment—it is certainly not necessary to curtail consumption in the most undemocratic way possible. An extension of rationing to tobacco, for instance, would not have touched the two million lowest-paid workers, salary earners, old age pensioners, etc., who anyway can smoke only little because the price of tobacco, before the present increase, was almost prohibitive for them. It would have touched the less poorly-paid ones and the better-paid ones ; it would have restricted their consumption ; it would, technically, for the war effort, have had the same effect ; and it would have been a democratic measure, worthy of the cause we are fighting for.

What is needed is the following changes in taxation : The exemption limits should be raised—£3 a week for single and £4 for married workers should be free of tax. Overtime earnings should be free of tax. As a step towards equality of sacrifice and preventing the Black Market operations that provide the rich with more than their share of available supplies, all incomes exceeding £1,000 a year should be taken in tax. The adoption of these principles would put right some of the worst features of existing taxation and help towards securing the maximum war effort.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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The Movement for British-Soviet Unity

by C. E. FEARN

(Honorary Secretary, National Council for British-Soviet Unity)

JUNE 22 marks the first anniversary of the two tremendous events which brought into being the British-Soviet Alliance—Hitlerite Germany's unprovoked and treacherous attack on the U.S.S.R., and Mr. Winston Churchill's broadcast pledging full aid to the Soviet people.

This anniversary will be commemorated throughout the country on a scale worthy of such an historic occasion. On Saturday, June 20, a pageant and demonstration will be staged in the huge Empress Hall, London; on the following day the Lord Mayor of Manchester's Committee is organising a demonstration at Belle Vue, which has accommodation for 7,000 people, and during the succeeding week demonstrations, meetings, and other events will be held in scores of other towns and districts.

In an appeal to local committees, the National Council for British-Soviet Unity urged that all Councils, factory managements and business firms should be asked to fly the Union Jack and the Soviet flag side by side on June 22; that local education authorities should be urged to arrange for special talks on the importance of the Alliance in the schools; that united services of intercession, preceded by civic processions, should be held on Sunday, June 21; and that Councils, factory and professional groups, and organisations of every kind should be invited to send to the Soviet Embassy resolutions pledging wholehearted support for the Alliance, and messages of friendship.

These suggestions have been taken up enthusiastically, and the host of activities that will be engaged in during the period of June 20-28 will bear eloquent testimony to the strength of the movement for British-Soviet Unity. The growth of this movement has been amazing. In the short space of eleven months it has become one of the biggest and most inspiring movements of modern times—a movement that is not only developing British-Soviet unity, but one that is also building up a new and permanent unity amongst the British people themselves.

It had its beginnings in the wave of enthusiasm which followed the British Prime Minister's broadcast. The feelings of the common people were expressed by the deluge of resolutions and messages that poured in from every quarter; by the processions, demonstrations and meetings that were organised as if by magic; by the spontaneous way groups of people and organisations of all kinds came together in order to raise money for Soviet medical aid.

At first these manifestations of friendship and sympathy for the Soviet people were mainly confined to the factories and to the working-class organisations; but, as the poison of years was dissipated, as the Soviet people, fighting with a valour and a tenacity without parallel, themselves revealed the truth about the Soviet Union, wider and still wider sections of the community joined the great new movement which had arisen.

In town after town British-Soviet Committees were set up. Many of them were established for the sole purpose of organising a Friendship Week, but it was quickly realised that Friendship Weeks were not an end—only a splendid beginning; that even more important tasks lay ahead. The task of guarding the Alliance and of bringing it to its maximum effectiveness. The task of helping to intensify the war effort and thus speeding up the victory over the common enemy. The task of disseminating factual information about the Soviet Union and about the Soviet way of life, so that there can be secured the understanding which is essential to any real friendship. Above all, the task of creating such a deep sense of unity—such a strong feeling of common purpose—that the Alliance can function as efficiently and as completely in the difficult times of Peace, as in the gruelling times of War.

As the significance of the great role of the British-Soviet Committees became appreciated, the existing committees consolidated themselves, and new committees came into existence. The work of these

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committees has been remarkable for its diversity and enterprise.

In addition to civic processions, open-air demonstrations and large public meetings, there have been held a multitude of specialised meetings. A North London committee, for instance, organised fortnightly lectures in a large factory in the district. Another London committee invited all the local clergy and church workers to hear an address by a Bishop on Anglo-Soviet relations. A Middlesex committee held a special meeting for doctors and members of the hospital staff. Birmingham has sent speakers to A.R.P. depots, works canteens and to 14 cinemas. Numerous committees have organised talks both for teachers and school children.

Messages of greetings have secured wide support. Tyneside collected 13,000 signatures in a fortnight, and Manchester women not only got their signatures, but, when on their way to London to deliver them to the Soviet Embassy, they seized the opportunity of collecting £11 from their fellow passengers. Exhibitions illustrative of Soviet life have also enjoyed a tremendous popularity: 13,600 people visited one in North Staffs; 2,000 of Huntingdon's population of 7,000 visited the exhibition organised in that town.

Large sums of money have been raised for Soviet medical aid. A hundred and one methods have been used to get it: celebrity concerts and fun fairs; performances of ballet and opera and barrel-organ collections in the streets. And the small towns have been just as successful as the big cities. St. Ives in Cornwall, for instance—with a population of 8,000—raised £1,500 for a Mobile X-ray Unit in record time. Oxford's week netted £3,000. A tiny Gloucestershire town, with a population of 2,000, raised £250 in a week, and a local firm promptly doubled it.

Comforts for the Red Army and the Soviet people have also been collected on a substantial scale. In Newcastle a special shop for receiving gifts has been opened. In Manchester they collected several tons of soap! And thousands of woollen garments have been knitted.

The above are just one or two examples
- the kind of work the British-Soviet
mittees have been doing. To attempt
e a complete catalogue would require
half a dozen pages of the LABOUR MONTHLY!

These committees, of course, vary greatly in influence and composition, but more and more it is being recognised that it is necessary for all of them to become, as quickly as possible, delegate bodies representative of every section of the community. A large number of them have already reached this stage of development. Indeed, many of them operate under the authority and prestige of the local Mayor and Corporation; in every sense of the word they are real Towns' Committees.

These broadly-based delegate committees are creating a new feeling of unity and brotherhood in the districts in which they operate. Past prejudices and sectarian differences are gradually being forgotten; barriers that once divided the people are slowly but surely being swept aside. In dozens of towns all the various sections of the working-class movement are already working in complete harmony; in other areas the desire for solidarity is rapidly gaining ground. But this spirit of active co-operation extends far beyond the working-class movement. Organisations of every kind—religious, cultural and political—are collaborating in a way never before witnessed.

The National Council was set up at the express wish of the committees. Its President is the Bishop of Chelmsford, and on it sit not only distinguished men and women of all points of view, but also representatives of National British-Soviet organisations and delegates from the British-Soviet Committees. Its purpose is to act as an advisory body to the local committees, to assist them in every possible way, and to guide their activities into one broad, mighty channel.

The work of the National Council cannot fail to strengthen the whole movement—the movement whose duty it is to serve as an impregnable bulwark against any attacks that may be launched against British-Soviet unity; the movement which is the best guarantee that the unity built up in War will not be dissipated in Peace; the movement that has an important role to play in the task which will confront us all when the Fascist barbarians have been finally crushed—the task of building up a real New World of Peace, Social Justice and Security.

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"GET A SPEAKER FROM NORWICH" is that one members' instruction which worries and saddens the life of every organisation's secretary. Speakers were never as plentiful as cockleries before the war. And now! Our LABOUR MONTHLY *Discussion Groups* are producing new speakers, first for their own gatherings and then for wider occasions. They become speakers because they have learned to organise their thoughts and to study political and other issues objectively. They're not spell binders, but "they know their stuff"—and that is all that is wanted.

LABOUR MONTHLY
DISCUSSION GROUPS

(Places in **BOLD TYPE** are new Groups. Places in *Italics* are projected Groups. (Please send STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE for particulars.)

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